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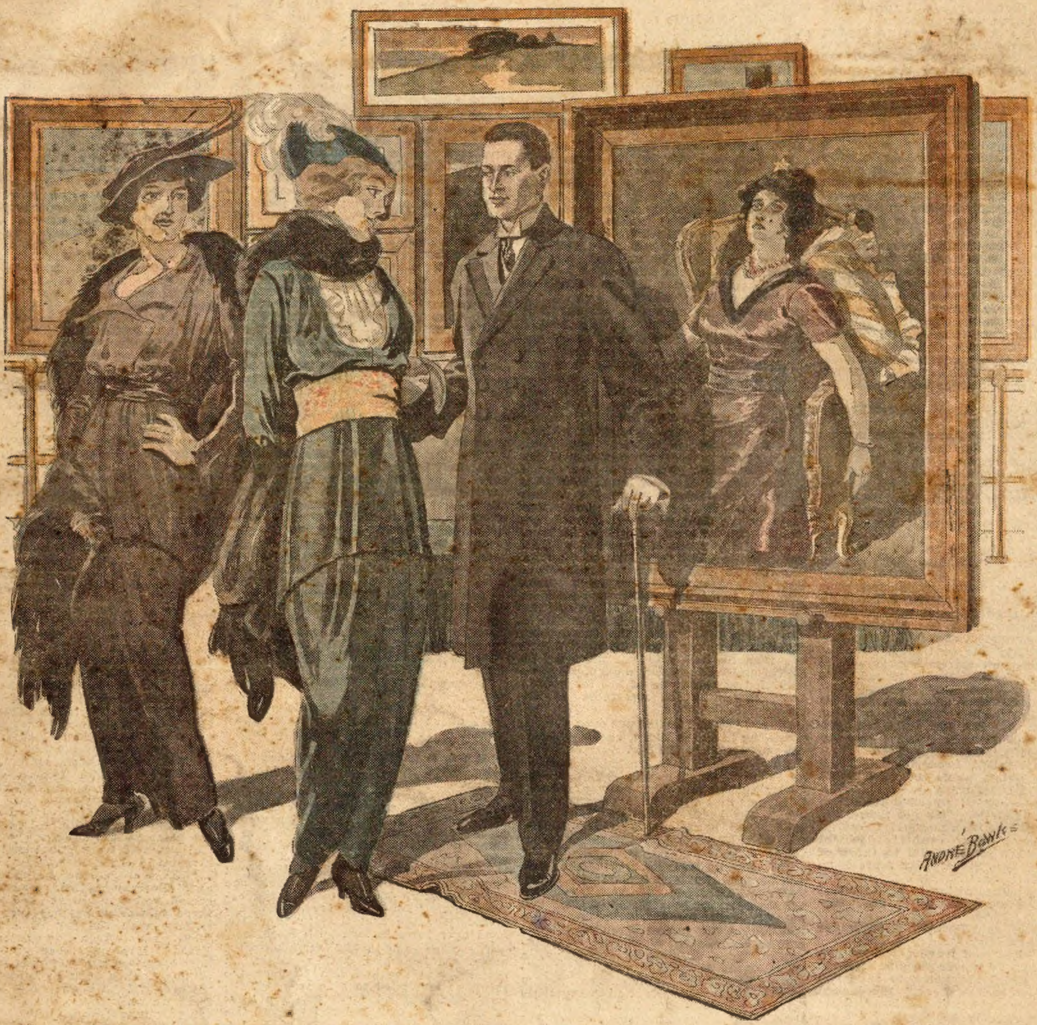

How One Man Loved

Or, Lupton's Remarkable Case

By Emma Howard Wight

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CHAPTER I.

IT WAS in accordance with the desire of Dorothy, his sister, that Frederick Lupton gave orders to drop anchor off the coast of Ireland in sight of a small village called Marr. They had been for a six months' cruise in Lupton's yacht, the Dorothy. Dorothy Lupton had induced her brother to bring her to Ireland to look up a schoolmate, Kathleen Marr, of whom she had been very fond. They had been pupils and roommates at a convent school in Paris.

"I love Kathleen dearly," Dorothy declared, as she stood with her brother on the deck of the yacht, her eyes fixed eagerly upon a great rambling gray house on a bluff above the village. "It nearly broke my heart when we parted. She's the loveliest creature you ever set eyes on, Frederick. I wouldn't be a bit surprised if you fell in love with her."

Frederick Lupton, Wall Street broker of New York City, forty-five years of age, looked down upon his pretty sister with an indulgent smile. He was a heavy-set man, with shoulders a little too broad for his height, a dark, resolute face, and prematurely white hair.

"That is Castle Marr," continued Dorothy, pointing to the gray house on the bluff. "Kathleen has often described it to me. She lives there with her father, Lord Marr."

Lupton lifted his brows. "So your friend is the daughter of an Irish lord?" he remarked.

Dorothy nodded. "Yes. But do you know, Frederick, they are very, very poor?"

"That is frequently the case among the Irish nobility," declared Lupton. "I suppose you want to go ashore?"

"Yes, indeed," replied Dorothy, eagerly. "I am wild to see Kathleen."

"I'll give orders about the boat," said Lupton, as he turned away.

A little later Lupton and Dorothy were being rowed by two stalwart sailors toward the shore. It was a perfect May day. The sun shone bright and warm, the sea was as smooth as glass. The great gray house on the bluff above the sea was bathed in golden sunlight.

The sailors made a landing upon a sharp point of beach that jutted out into the sea. Lupton helped Dorothy from the boat, and they started up the winding road toward the castle cut out of the gray rock of the bluff. The road was very steep; in some places it was open to the sea, and in others shut in by a sheer wall of rock. Lupton and Dorothy were a little breathless when they reached the top. There they stopped and looked about them. Distance had lent enchantment to the great gray house. The walls were weather-beaten, stained, and in places crumbling. The grounds were wild and neglected, the outbuildings falling to pieces.

Dorothy looked shocked.

"Oh!" she breathed. "And this is what is called a castle."

Lupton nodded.

"Yes, in—Ireland."

They moved toward the front of the house. Great doors opened upon a sort of walled portico, raised by a single stone step above the ground.

The doors stood open, and as Lupton and Dorothy reached the step, a girl in a black gown came out of the house. At the sight of Lupton and Dorothy she stopped abruptly in the shadow of the portico.

"Kathleen!" cried Dorothy, darting forward and throwing her arms about the black-clad form.

Lupton turned and moved away. He walked a little distance and stood looking out over the sea. He turned as the murmur of voice fell upon his ear. Dorothy and her friend were approaching, their arms affectionately interlaced. They both looked as if they had been crying.

A thrill of admiration went through Lupton as he looked at Kathleen Marr. She was a typical Irish beauty. Dusky-haired, with dark blue eyes, black-lashed, lovely dark brows, and marvelous rose-and-white coloring. Her nose was patrician, her mouth exquisite. She was tall and slim, with long beautiful, sinuous lines. Her movements were slow, graceful, with a suggestion of languor. Dorothy's petite figure, piquant blonde prettiness, and vivacity formed a striking contrast.

"Kathleen, this is my brother Frederick," said Dorothy.

The girl gave Lupton a rather curious glance, as she held out a white hand with long, tapering fingers.

"I am pleased to meet you, Miss Marr," Lupton said, his pulses quickening, as her satin smooth hand rested for a moment in his. "I cannot quite regard you as a stranger. Dorothy has talked of you so much," he added.

"It was good of you to bring Dorothy to me," declared Kathleen, with a look of gratitude.

Her voice was low-toned and very sweet, one of those voices in which there is a subtle suggestion of tenderness, a voice which possessed the capability of making the simplest of words a caress.

"I am alone," she continued, the long black lashes sweeping her rose-hued cheeks, the beautiful face very sad. "My father died a month ago."

Lupton murmured some conventional words of sympathy. He felt a great compassion for the girl, while he was vividly conscious of how lovely she was in her plaintiveness and sadness.

"And just fancy, Frederick, Kathleen has been living alone in that great house," said Dorothy.

"Not quite alone," amended Kathleen, with a faint smile. "My old nurse and her husband live with me."

"Oh, they don't count!" declared Dorothy. "It's too dreadful to think of your living here alone. You must come with us, Kathleen."

Kathleen looked at her in half-startled manner. "Come with you?" she murmured.

"Of course," said Dorothy, nodding her head emphatically. "Do you suppose I am going away and leave you here like this? Why, I'd never forgive myself. Frederick and I are going to take you back with us to New York." She looked at her brother. "Aren't we, Frederick?"

"I shall be only too happy," he replied, with great sincerity.

Kathleen drew a deep breath, and her eyes lighted. "I would love to go with you," she murmured.

"You are coming with us, of course," declared Dorothy. She hesitated a moment, and then added with a questioning glance at Kathleen, "There is nothing to keep you here?"

Kathleen shook her head sadly. "No," she replied.

Dorothy Lupton was a young person who was accustomed to having her own way. Her parents were dead, and she had been spoiled and indulged by her brother, who was much older than she. She had set her heart on Kathleen Marr's accompanying them, and it would not have proved easy to turn her from her purpose. But Kathleen, heartsick, lonely, wearied to despair of her desolate life and the struggle with poverty, did not require much urging.

"I will go with you on one condition—that you put me in the way of earning my own living," she told Dorothy. "We were very poor while my father was living, but now," her sweet voice faltered a little, "Castle Marr has passed to my cousin. I must do something to make my living."

Dorothy was about to protest when her brother stopped her with a warning look. He knew that the high-born Irish girl was proud, and would never consent to be dependent. Dorothy read his thought, and said, quickly:

"That can be arranged later. Come along now and let's pack your trunk. Frederick will send the sailors to carry it down to the boat."

Kathleen stared at her a little breathlessly. "You wish me to come with you—now?" she queried.

"Certainly," replied Dorothy. She laughed and slipped her arm about Kathleen's waist. "I am not going to lose sight of you until I have you safe on board the yacht."

Kathleen stood thoughtful, a little irresolute.

"You mustn't take Dorothy too seriously, Miss Marr," said Lupton. "We are entirely at your service. If it doesn't suit you to go with us now, appoint your own time."

She sighed a little and looked at him, smiling faintly.

"I will go with you now," she decided. "There is no reason for delay. It will be hard to part from my old nurse, but putting it off will not make it any the easier."

"It is not necessary for you to part from her," said Lupton. "Bring her with you."

She flashed upon him a swift look of gratitude which thrilled him as no look in a woman's eyes ever had before.

"It is very good of you to think of that," she said. "But it would break Bridget's heart to leave Ireland, and there is Patrick, her husband."

"Of course we couldn't think of leaving her husband behind," exclaimed Dorothy. She glanced roguishly at Frederick. "I am surprised at you, Frederick."

Kathleen laughed a low, soft laugh of amusement. Lupton smiled.

"I had forgotten for the moment that Bridget had a husband," he explained.

"Poor Patrick!" murmured Kathleen. "It would be easier for him to part with Bridget than to leave dear old Ireland."

The two girls went back to the house. Lupton returned to the shore and sent the two sailors to the house to fetch Kathleen's trunk to the boat.

Filled with a strange feeling of elation, Lupton walked restlessly about the beach as he awaited the coming of his sister and their guest. The beauty of Kathleen Marr obsessed him. Frederick Lupton was a man in whose life women had played little part. He had found some women more attractive than others, but he had never really been in love. He was in no sense of the word a lady's man, and he cared very little for society. The greater part of his time and attention were given to his business. There was but one creature in the world he loved—his sister. He had never felt the need of a different love, never felt a dawning consciousness that there were sweeter, more wonderful possibilities in life than he had ever known—until he looked on Kathleen Marr's exquisite face, marveled at the grace of her long, lithe body, drank in the sweetness of her voice.

He stopped and looked out over the sea sparkling in the sunlight, and a whimsical smile touched his lips.

"Am I, Frederick Lupton, forty-five years old, prosaic man of business, guilty of the schoolboy folly of falling in love at first sight?" he murmured. He shook his head. "Absurd! The girl's beauty has bewitched me. The feeling will wear off when I become more accustomed to it."

But even as he tried to reassure himself he was conscious that his reasoning was mere sophistry. The rare loveliness, the sensuous grace of Kathleen Marr had acted upon Lupton like some intoxicant. But after a little while there came a reaction, the feeling of elation was succeeded by a feeling of depression, a premonition of evil, a vague presentiment. Frederick Lupton was not a superstitious man, he had very little faith in presentiments, but there came a time when he remembered the strange feelings which had dominated him on that afternoon when Kathleen Marr came into his life, and wondered at their significance. He was a man of strong will, and he soon threw off the feeling of gloom and depression, but he was a little graver than usual as he went forward to meet Kathleen and Dorothy as they came down the winding road. There were traces of tears on Kathleen's lovely face. The sailors followed, carrying her trunk, which they placed in the boat.

The parting between Kathleen and her old nurse had been very affecting, Dorothy confided later to her brother. The poor old creature was heart-broken—"such delightfully quaint creatures, she and her husband."

"The furniture would drive a lover of the antique crazy," Dorothy had declared. "But everything showed poverty. Poor Kathleen! What a hard, dreary life hers has been!"

"Let us hope that a brighter, happier life is opening to her," Lupton said quietly.

He assisted the two girls into the boat and followed them. No one spoke as the sailors took up the oars and rowed away from the shore. Kathleen sat with her eyes lifted to the gray walls of Castle Marr, her beautiful face pale, her mouth tremulous. Dorothy leaned forward and slipped her arm about her waist.

"Don't look so sad, dear," she murmured. "There are happy times coming."

A faint smile quivered across Kathleen's lips. She turned her head slowly and looked at the yacht to which every stroke of the oars was bringing them nearer.

CHAPTER II.

TWO months later. Frederick Lupton stood upon the deck of the Dorothy, his eyes fixed upon the Statue of Liberty outlined against the vivid blue of the sky, as the yacht headed for New York harbor. A feeling of regret stole over Lupton. The past two months had been filled with a glamour which steeped the senses and changed his prosaic, practical life into something wonderful, rose-colored, bewildering, heretofore undreamed-of. He had made no attempt to analyze his sensations, his perfect content, the thrilling consciousness of happiness. He simply let himself drift. And now it was over. He looked at the city they were approaching with a feeling of distaste, he gave scarcely a thought to the business which heretofore had filled the greater part of his life. Everything was changed to him; he was only too conscious of that fact, but he shrank from baring the reason of this change even to his own soul.

Dorothy came out upon the deck and approached Lupton. She stood looking with pleased eyes toward the wonderful and beautiful city.

"Dear old New York!" she exclaimed, with something like tenderness in her voice. "There is no place like it in all the world, after all. We have had a lovely time, Frederick," she turned toward her brother. "But I am glad to be back in New York. Aren't you?"

"No," he replied. She gave him a quick glance. "You know I am very fond of yachting," he added, as he met her eyes.

"Are you?" A little amused twinkle sparkled in Dorothy's eyes. "I didn't know you were so very fond of it. Haven't you developed a great fondness for it during—the past two months?"

He stared slightly and looked at her quickly.

"During the past two months?" he repeated.

She nodded, with the suspicion of a smile about her lips. He looked away from her. It was a moment or so before he spoke.

"It has been very pleasant since Miss Marr has been with us," he said very simply.

The girl's face changed. A tender look, in which there was a touch of compassion, stole into her blue eyes. She moved nearer to him, rubbing her cheek in a kittenishly caressing way against his arm.

"Frederick, you poor dear, don't you know what's the matter with you?" she queried softly. He looked at her questioningly. "You're in love," she declared, "for the first time in your life, head over heels in love with Kathleen."

The color rose in his face, then died away leaving him rather white. It startled and shocked him to hear the thing he had tried to hide from his inmost self dragged forth into the light of day. The girl looked at him half-wonderingly. He met her eyes and smiled.

"When a man reaches my age and falls in love for the first time it is no light matter to him," he explained, with a touch of pathos.

Dorothy pouted. "And, now, I must share you with some one else," she murmured.

He started and his heart beat quicker. "I had not thought of asking her to marry me," he murmured "I am afraid she would not."

"Try her and see," advised Dorothy, as Kathleen appeared on the deck.

"Oh, how wonderful! how beautiful!" exclaimed Kathleen, as she came up to them, her eyes fixed upon the city.

Dorothy, with a little pang of jealousy at her heart, turned and went quietly away.

Lupton looked at Kathleen. The rose hue had deepened on her cheeks, her lovely eyes were aglow, her flower-red lips half parted and tremulous. Her beauty thrilled Lupton to the soul. He forgot time, place, everything save that he loved her.

"Kathleen!" he murmured passionately.

She turned and looked at him. There was no mistaking the look in his eyes. Her own fell, and she shrank a little.

"I love you," Lupton continued. "You are the first, the only woman I have ever loved." He paused a moment. "Will you marry me, Kathleen?"

She was silent for a moment.

"I am afraid that I do not care for you as you care for me," she said.

He smiled. "I do not expect that," he declared. He hesitated. "Do you care for any one else?" he asked.

She shook her head. "Oh, no."

He drew a long breath of relief.

"I shall try very hard to make you happy if you will marry me," he said. "I am a rich man. You shall never have a wish ungratified, a desire unfulfilled."

The girl smiled a little sadly.

"You do not know how great a temptation you are offering me," she declared. "My life has been so devoid of pleasure. I have never known anything but poverty, genteel poverty, the bitterest of all." She looked up at him smiling faintly. "The life you are offering me seems like—heaven."

The blood raced through Lupton's veins and his heart throbbed.

"You will marry me?" he queried breathlessly.

For the moment she hesitated. The woman's instinct stirred within her with a vague warning against giving herself where she did not love. But knowing nothing of love, the warning stirred her but faintly, and passed away. Her eyes were fixed upon the wonderful, beautiful city, as she replied:

"Yes, I will marry you."

Her beautiful ungloved hand rested upon the railing by which they stood. Lupton's fingers closed over it.

"You have made me happier than I have words to tell you," he said.

CHAPTER III.

DOROTHY LUPTON flushed brightly and a glow came into her blue eyes as Godfrey Livingstone came up to where she was sitting on a couch in a Fifth avenue art gallery. Dorothy was not artistic; she did not care particularly for paintings, and had been feeling a little bored. But Godfrey Livingstone shook hands with her and then seated himself beside her, there was a rose-hued glamour over everything; the world was transformed.

The man had little difficulty in interpreting aright the hot flush on the girl's cheek and the soft light in her eyes. But it scarcely aroused his interest. The love-light in a woman's eyes was to him an oft-repeated tale. Godfrey Livingstone was a man favored of the gods. He had talent which, winning recognition, brought him fame. He made a large income from his paintings, and he was superbly handsome.

"When did you return to New York?" he asked Dorothy. "The last time I had the pleasure of seeing you your brother and yourself were about starting upon a cruise in the Dorothy."

"Oh, we returned several months ago," Dorothy replied. Her cheeks had cooled and her heart had ceased to throb so wildly, but her eyes were still radiant with the joy of his presence. "You have been away from New York?" Her voice, her eyes told him how conscious she had been of the fact.

"Yes, I have been in Boston," he explained. "I only returned last night. Shall we walk about and take a look at the paintings?" he added.

Dorothy arose reluctantly. She did not care for the paintings, and she would have much preferred remaining where she was with Godfrey Livingstone. She was very much in love with the handsome and fascinating artist.

"I have seen your painting called 'Death,'," she told him, as they moved along the gallery. "It made me shudder."

Livingstone laughed. "Do you know you are paying me a great compliment?" he said.

"Oh, there can be no question as to the realism of the painting," declared Dorothy. "Come, let's go and look at it," she added childishly.

Godfrey Livingstone's painting stood upon an easel at the far end of the gallery. Standing before it, absorbed, fascinated, was a woman enveloped in dark, costly furs, which brought out dazzlingly the wonderful tints of her skin. The artist's gray eyes lighted as he looked at her.

"What a lovely woman!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, Kathleen is beautiful," Dorothy admitted generously.

Livingstone looked at her quickly.

TO LEDGER READERS

Be sure and read **"HOW ONE MAN LOVED; or, LUPTON'S REMARKABLE CASE,"** in this issue. It is a strange and fascinating story. Look out for **"DETECTIVE GREY'S COUP; or, THE HORN OF THE MOON,"** an extraordinary story of making pearls and fooling the United States Reserve Banks. **"WARSHIP ADVENTURES; or, FRANK ALLEN AT SEA,"** sure next week. We have a splendid lot of stories awaiting room in the pages of the Ledger, some of the very best stories ever written. Wait for them. If you cannot get the Ledger regularly from our agents, we would be glad to have you send in a subscription. The Ledger is the greatest story paper in America. This is the general verdict. Come in with us and see.

"Kathleen?" he queried.

"She is my sister-in-law," Dorothy explained.

Livingstone lifted his brows, the only evidence he gave of the surprise the information afforded him.

"Indeed!" he murmured. "I had not heard of your brother's marriage."

By this time they had reached Kathleen. She flashed a quick look of interest at Livingstone as Dorothy introduced him.

"Are you the artist who painted this picture?" she asked.

He bowed.

"Do you like it?" he asked.

She turned again to the painting.

"It is wonderful," she replied. "But I am not sure that I like it."

The picture portrayed a dead woman half reclining in a great, gold-colored chair, clad in a red velvet gown, with a necklace of rubies about her throat and a ruby star in her midnight hair. The pallor of death was on her face, her bare shoulders and arms, the wide-open eyes had the glazed, fixed look of death. The coloring of the picture was marvelous, the painting itself startlingly realistic.

"It is a strange idea for a painting," declared Kathleen.

"The painting is taken from life," explained Livingstone.

Kathleen involuntarily recoiled from the painting.

"Oh!" exclaimed Dorothy. She turned to Livingstone. "Do tell us about it."

"Two years ago, while I was in Rome, I dined one evening with the Count Ernestto Malatesta at his handsome villa just outside the city," began Livingstone. "The Count Malatesta was a man about fifty years of age, married to a young and lovely wife. The dinner was a stag affair. There were five other men present beside myself, one of them a young and handsome Italian, named Roberto Berrini, the reputed lover of the Countess Malatesta. After we had finished our wine and cigars, the Count Malatesta proposed joining the Countess in the drawingroom. When we went into the room we found the Countess Malatesta," he paused a moment, then pointed to the painting, adding, "like that."

"Dead?" exclaimed Dorothy.

Livingstone nodded. "Yes. Later it developed that she had been poisoned. Suspicion pointed to her husband."

"Her husband!" cried Kathleen. "How awful!"

"Jealousy was supposed to be the motive," explained Livingstone. "He was madly in love with his wife, and she did not reciprocate. She loved another man."

"She was a wicked woman, and the husband was a monster," declared Dorothy.

Kathleen was silent. She had grown a little pale. The story both horrified and depressed her. Livingstone gave her a keen glance.

"What was done to the husband?" asked Dorothy.

Livingstone shrugged his shoulders.

"Nothing. They could not prove that he had poisoned his wife. He married a woman who he knew did not love him. He should have been prepared for her falling in love with some one else."

"Why the idea!" exclaimed Dorothy. "A married woman has no business even to think of another man."

Livingstone laughed and shrugged his shoulders.

"Perhaps not. But it sometimes happens."

Still Kathleen did not speak. She stood gazing at the painting. The dead woman, who had been false to her marriage vows and paid for it with her life, fascinated and repelled her. And still she pitied her, felt for her a sort of undefined sympathy. For the first time since she had been the wife of Frederick Lupton, she asked herself if she were perfectly happy. Such a question had never risen in her mind before since her marriage, for it had seemed to her that she had everything in the world to make a woman happy. But now, for the first time, it occurred to her that there might be something lacking in her life. Had the picture of the beautiful dead woman and her tragic story taught her that? Or the look of admiration, passionate, soft, caressing, in the handsome gray eyes of Godfrey Livingstone?

She turned with sudden abruptness from the picture.

"Shall we go now?" she asked, addressing Dorothy. "I think we have seen all the paintings worth while."

As she looked at Dorothy, her eyes lingered on the girl's face. Dorothy was flushed and her eyes shone. Kathleen had never seen her look so pretty. Kathleen would not have been a woman if she had not connected the change in the girl with the appearance of Godfrey Livingstone upon the scene. She glanced from Dorothy to him. And in the moment that she suspected Dorothy's love for Livingstone, she guessed how entirely indifferent he was to her.

As she glanced at him again, she saw in his eyes the same look of passionate, unconcealed admiration and the blood quickened in her veins. She was well used to the admiration in the eyes of men, but it had never before had power to thrill her. She knew that she was beautiful. What woman who is does not? But her beauty had never seemed so wonderful a gift until Godfrey Livingstone's gray eyes paid tribute to it.

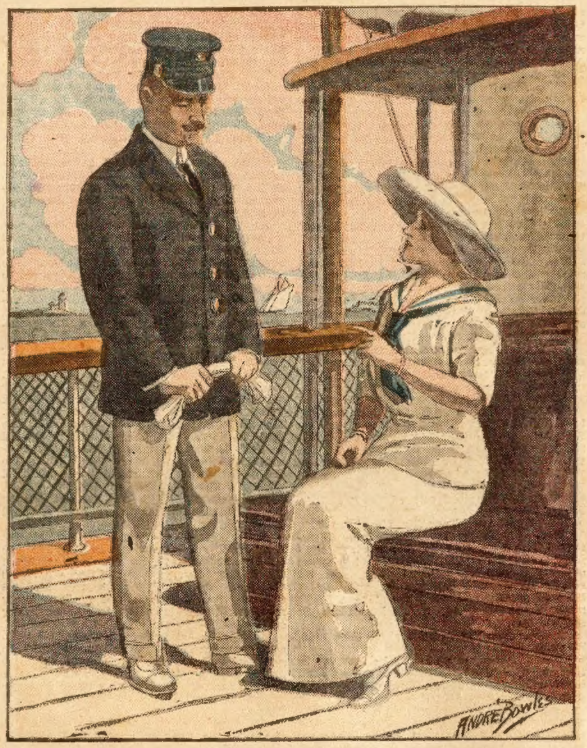
CHAPTER IV.

AT DINNER that evening, Dorothy told her brother of their meeting with Godfrey Livingstone.

"I am glad he has returned to New York," declared Frederick Lupton. "I shall have him paint a portrait of Kathleen."

Kathleen looked up with a slight flush. Dorothy looked across at Kathleen's lovely face, and a little stab, like jealousy, went through her. It was an impersonal jealousy, not of Kathleen herself, but of the beauty which she knew could not fail to appeal to an artistic temperament like Godfrey Livingstone's. In a moment, however, she had conquered the feeling.

"Kathleen will make a lovely picture," she said, with a little affectionate smile across the table at her sister-in-law.



"You're in love!"

"Yes," and Lupton glanced smilingly and tenderly at his young wife. "Would you like it, Kathleen?" he asked.

Again she flushed.

"Oh, yes, I would like it very much indeed," she replied.

"I'll speak to Livingstone about it," said Lupton.

"I am sure he will be delighted to paint Kathleen," declared Dorothy. "I have heard that he refuses to paint ugly persons," and she laughed.

"I should think that that would not be at all politic," said Kathleen. "And that such discrimination would make him enemies."

"It would if he were not famous," explained Lupton. "Great latitude is accorded to fame."

"Perhaps he is right in not desiring to perpetuate the unlovely," said Kathleen, as she arose from the table.

Dorothy was about to follow her from the room when she stopped and looked back at her brother.

"Aren't you coming with us to the opera tonight, Frederick?" she asked

"I think not," Lupton replied, as he poured himself out a glass of wine. "I am feeling very tired tonight."

Kathleen had passed out of the room. Dorothy returned and stood beside Lupton.

"What is the matter, dear?" she asked concernedly.

He glanced at her quickly.

"What do you mean, Dorothy?" he exclaimed.

"You are looking badly, Frederick, pale and worn out," replied Dorothy, gravely. "What is it? Are you overworked?"

"Perhaps I am," he half admitted.

"Why do you do it?"

He smiled gravely. "There can be but one reason—to make money," he replied.

"But it cannot be necessary, Frederick," exclaimed Dorothy. "You have sufficient money."

He smiled and laid his hand affectionately upon the solicitous girl's shoulder.

"Don't bother your pretty head with such matters, little sister," he replied. "Run away now and enjoy yourself."

As she went away a little reluctantly, a shadow fell across Lupton's face and a sigh left his lips. He sat for a few moments, his head resting upon his hand. Then he aroused himself, finished his glass of wine, passed out of the room, and went to the drawingroom, where he found Kathleen alone. She was standing thoughtfully in front of the mantel, wearing a coral satin gown, with diamonds in her dusky hair, about her throat, and on her breast. It was one of Frederick Lupton's greatest pleasures to lavish jewels upon his young wife. She started a little and turned as he approached her.

"Why, you are not dressed, Frederick?" she murmured, a little abstractedly.

He explained to her, as he had to Dorothy, that he was feeling tired and had decided to remain at home. He had made the same plea so often of late that she accepted it as a matter of course, and made no comment. Lupton felt a little pang as he remembered Dorothy's solicitude. He was as madly in love with his beautiful wife as he had been on the day they were married, but he knew that he had not succeeded in winning her love.

"Kathleen," he took her lovely hand, on the long tapering fingers of which his gifts sparkled, in his own as he spoke, "tell me, are you happy?"

"Happy?" She looked at him and smiled. "Oh, yes! How could I be otherwise than happy? You have given me everything to make any woman happy. Think of what my life was before you made me your wife, before you came into my life—the dreariness, the loneliness, the poverty. And, now—why it is like—heaven. Oh, I cannot tell you how grateful I am!"

He smiled a little sadly.

"Grateful!" She gave him a quick glance. "Kathleen, I want more than gratitude from you." She flushed, and her eyes fell. "I want something deeper, tenderer, more passionate." He paused a moment. "I want your love."

The flush died from her cheeks and her beautiful face grew troubled.

"I—I am sorry," she murmured.

He suppressed a sigh. "I am not reproaching you, dear," he said very gently. "I married you knowing that you did not love me. I shall go on trying to win your love. God willing," he smiled, "some day I shall succeed."

There was the light of hope in his eyes as he drew her to him and kissed her passionately. And in that moment there came to Kathleen the conviction that try as hard as she might, she would never learn to love him. And she felt troubled, afraid.

"Frederick, you have given me so much," she said, with a sigh, as she withdrew herself from his arms. "And I have given you nothing in return!"

"Nothing?" he repeated, with a half-smile. "You have given me—yourself."

She shook her head.

"I have given you nothing that compensates for all that you have given me," she declared. "You rescued me from dire poverty. Oh, you do not know what it means to be poor!"

An odd look flashed across his face. It was a moment or so before he spoke.

"No, I have never known what it means to be poor," he said. "It must be very hard, especially for a woman."

"It is more bitterly hard than I can tell you," she declared. "A woman who has to struggle with poverty had far better be dead." Her lovely face clouded for the moment, then she glanced around the luxurious room and laughed softly. "But that is all over and done with now. Oh," she looked at him, her eyes aglow, "how I have longed for the things that money can buy. But I never quite realized how delightful it is to be rich." She glanced at herself in the mirror above the mantel. "To have beautiful gowns and jewels. Oh, I love them! I love them!"

Frederick Lupton stood gazing at her silently, a strange look on his face.

The continuation of this highly interesting story will be found in the Ledger issue of next week. Read it. If you are not a regular subscriber to the Ledger we would like to have your name on our list. The Ledger is only $1.00 per year.

* * *

Restaurant Slang.

Waiters in the cheaper American restaurants possess a vocabulary of slang and a stock of stories replete with humor. There is an old story of a waiter who shouted out his orders in such quaint terms that a traveler determined to baffle the man's ingenuity. The waiter, however, was equal to the occasion, so when the traveler ordered two eggs, which were to be scrambled and served on toast, the waiter translated the order to "Adam and Eve on a raft. Shipwreck them."

Two customers, a man and a woman, who visited a cheap restaurant in New York, were startled when they gave their orders and heard the waiter in turn shout them through a small window to the cook.

"Give me two eggs fried on one side and three slices of crisp, broiled breakfast bacon," ordered the man.

"Two cackles slapped in the face and three squeals crisp," howled the waiter, while the woman looked aghast.

"And yours, madam," said the waiter, innocent of creating any sensation.

"I'd like a steak, well done, covered with onions," she replied.

"One steak, cremated and suffocated," again yelled the waiter.

"What would you like to drink?" asked the waiter.

Here is what the waiter ordered:

"Cup of mud, two chunks of ballast, milk the Jersey, and throw in a piece of scrap-iron; draw another in the dark."

"Did you ever see a Jew come in," said a veteran waiter in another restaurant, "go to a side table, and whisper that he wants pork chops? This is what we tell the cook: 'Forbidden fruit, put out the lights and chase the rabbi!'"

At one of the health resorts in the United States persons in declining health would ask for invalid dishes. Accordingly an order of milk toast with a poached egg on top became known to waiters as: "Graveyard stew; tombstone on top."

In the very cheapest class of restaurants "suicide" is the waiter's term for a small steak.

Among other terms that may be heard any day in these restaurants are the following:

"Four on two, right and left." Two orders of eggs fried on both sides, placed on toast.

"Two cackles and a pig." Pork and eggs.

"Shorty Brown in swimming." Short ribs with brown gravy.

"Stack of blankets." Wheat cakes.

"Two chickens on a hill." Chicken croquettes.

"Floating in the ocean." Poached eggs.

One of the regular customers of a city restaurant observed for several mornings that, when serving the dishes, a new waiter would invariably get his fingers in the meat and vegetable dishes. When the aforesaid waiter came around to the table one morning the customer gave the following order, supplemented with some sarcastic comment:

"Give me two hard-boiled eggs with the shells on, a cocoanut, and a pot of tea; now get your fingers in 'em, will you?"—Life.

* * *

Hard to Tell.

"Old Rocks, the multi-millionaire, is feeling awfully depressed."

"What's the matter?"

"Why, he made a bad investment last summer and will lose $10,000. It breaks him all up. Says he knows he's on his way to the poorhouse. I pointed out to him that he could lose $10,000 a year for 1,500 years without coming to the end of his pile. 'And what do you suppose he said?'"

"Give it up."

"He said: 'And what will happen to me then?'"

The Gay Girl Mystery

Or, Two Damsels Errant

By Victor Ardmore

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CHAPTER VII.

THE LOCKED DOOR.

IN THE morning Amy Thelma rose and prepared for breakfast. She was moving about her room when she happened to notice a newspaper that lay open on the stand. It was nothing new, for she had been supplied with reading since she came, but certain large headlines attracted her attention now, and she mechanically read them.

"'Burglars Make a Haul. Jewels and Silver Among the Loot.'"

She had read the article before, it being a paper two days old, and did not give it further perusal now. It set her to thinking, however.

"I feel," she mused, "that I should be grateful to that burglar. His operations will turn attention away from my own case, and I shall be less stubbornly pursued. Good burglar! I'd like to shake his hand sometime!"

She crossed the floor and was about to leave the room when she saw something lying partly under a chair. She started, picked it up and held it, her eyes growing troubled.

Five minutes later she entered the eatingroom below and found Gresham there, a sleepy look in his eyes, but otherwise himself. Greetings were exchanged, and then she went quickly to his side.

"Is this yours?" she asked. "Do you see what it is?"

It was what she had found in her room, and he looked obediently.

"A blue cotton handkerchief," he replied, smiling.

"Is it yours?" she added.

"Hardly! Too artistic."

"Do you know whose it is?"

"Never saw it before."

She had seen Mrs. Tilley give her husband a side look, but she asked the same question of them and received the same answers.

"Unlike you," she continued, "I know whose it is. It belongs to Constable Watson, one of the men who were pursuing me, that night."

"Why," Gresham asked uneasily, "do you think that?"

"Because I recognize it. I saw him have it."

"Many other men must also have mates of it."

"Do you see this?" she asked, fluttering the handkerchief. "Look!—on one side it is torn along the hem, so that a strip dangles. Most men would tear away such a strip, wholly but Watson did not. I noticed that when with him. This is his handkerchief. He has been in my room. Why? Yes, and when?"

Mr. Tilley was looking at his plate, and his wife found a spot on the tablecloth to rub, but Gresham did not evade the point, well aware that he could not deceive the girl, he wasted no time.

"Frankly, he was here last night, and to look for you. Luckily, we had already heard of his intention, and you were not here."

Amy Thelma scanned his face sharply, and light dawned upon her.

"That's why you took me to sea in the boat!" she exclaimed.

"That was it," he admitted. "Don't worry, for the danger is over. When we heard that Watson was coming we also learned that nobody expected you to be here. It was to be a step to make sure, but nothing else. We thought it just as well you should not know he was coming, so I took you out in the Gay Girl. He came, poked around carelessly, and went back. The search has been made, so there will be no more of it."

"Are you sure he went back to the mainland?"

"Yes, Tilley saw him off."

She drew a sigh of relief. She had been saved through the kindness of her new friends, and by a device that would have left her without a worry but for the handkerchief. Gresham enlarged upon the subject, assuring her that, now the search had been made, she was safer than ever before. Tilley and his island had never been under suspicion, and were not likely to be.

Her thanks were well expressed, and the breakfast was eaten in the usual good fellowship that prevailed on Long John. Afterward she went to her room and stood looking out, surveying the vicinity where she had seen the Gay Girl in the night. More than ever she wondered what had taken Gresham away after he was supposed to be asleep.

Betsey came to her a little later.

"I don't fully understand this island," said the old woman, abruptly.

"What do you mean?"

"Do folks ever sleep here?"

"I do. Don't you?"

"Not so very sound, for this matter troubles my nerves, but that is not what I mean. No wonder Mr. Gresham takes naps in the daytime. Do you know, he was astir last night after he left us! I woke some time along—I don't know when—and thought I heard something moving, so I looked out of the window. I saw him."

"Him? Do you mean Mr. Gresham?"

"Yes. He came to the house and entered, and it was away along after midnight. He carried a bundle in his arms as big as—as a pillow. Yes, stepped softly along and walked in, just as if he had something to hide. The Tilleys must have been up, for I heard slight sounds below."

"I wish you knew just when that was, Betsey."

"I don't, but why should he get up in the middle of the night to bring that bundle into the house? One would think day was never coming."

Amy Thelma said nothing. She remembered Gresham's trip in the Gay Girl and knew that this was before Betsey's discovery. He had been away, had returned, and then brought something to the house.

"The bundle seemed heavy," Betsey continued. "Do you suppose it was money? Did you ever hear of gold being dug along here? No, nor nobody else ever did, but it was something. I saw that much!" and she nodded sagaciously.

"Did you see him go out of the house afterwards?"

"No, for I went back to bed. Night prowling doesn't appeal to me."

"Well, we need not worry about it. Mr. Gresham has been very thoughtful and has never tried to learn my secret, so we will pattern after him. He was about something innocent.'

"But that bundle—never mind, though! He is all right."

"He must be. I have not seen my name in the papers, but I very much suspect that he knows about me. He has been ashore, and so has Mr. Tilley. They must have heard—I think. How kind they are to say nothing."

Impressed by her own logic she had such a thrill of gratitude that, seeing Gresham walking toward the north shore, she hastened after him. When she overtook him he was by the water, carrying the oars from the bushes to the dory.

"What! are you going away?" she asked, surprised.

"Yes, ashore for a while. Fact is, the motorboat has gone wrong. A vital part of her machinery is nearly broken in two, and it must be replaced with a new one. Even a better workman than I would fail to mend the old one. For the present the Gay Girl is crippled and can't go an inch. Except for the dory we are marooned here."

"What will you do?"

"Find a trustworthy man on the mainland who is known to Tilley, and post him off to the city in haste. The broken part can't be replaced hereabouts."

"How did you learn of the break? The Gay Girl seemed all right when we came in, last night."

Gresham's smile faded and his gaze left her face and traveled seaward.

"To a novice, yes," he replied. "Still, before I fetched the boat into her nook the last time"—he started a little as if his words were not just what he wanted to say—"I saw her limp. Examination revealed the break. She is out of it for a while—can't run an atom. Utterly crippled!"

Amy Thelma suspected that the trouble occurred long after they returned from their pleasure trip, but she held fast to her resolution not to pry into his secrets.

"I'll show you the break later," he added. "Just now I think I had better be off for the mainland. It would be a little troublesome if we had occasion to flee and the boat was no better than dead."

"I see, I see! I won't delay you. Good luck!"

"Thank you. Success is what I'm having ever since I came to this section, and I think my lucky star has not deserted me. In fact, my star has been bright, of late."

He had turned toward the dory, but swung back to give the last words, and they were said with a peculiarity that brought added color to her cheeks. She refrained from asking particulars as to his star. He entered the dory, shoved off, and was soon pulling away. She remained watching him, and twice he paused to wave his hand to her, but distance soon made this a waste of time.

Sitting on a rock, she continued her watch until she saw him and his boat merge into the farness of the coast. Afterward she walked back, and, her thoughts being much on the disabled boat, continued until she reached it. The engine seemed to call to her, and she looked for the fracture It was not hard to find, and she patted it with a sympathetic finger. It was hard that the debonair Gay Girl should be afflicted with the ills to which her kind was heir, for she seemed born for life, rollicking good humor and more or less musical chugging.

Except for that, everything was as she had seen it before. Standing in the cabin, she took in its features with an appraising eye. The table with its drawers, the bunks with the lockers tucked away beneath, and various other things, told of the well-planned economy of space.

The table—she was standing by it, and now she mechanically opened the nearest drawer. It was empty, and she did not guess that, had she come on a certain other night, she would have found a partial set of burglar's tools there.

"Prying!" she suddenly exclaimed, shoving the drawer back with a slam. "Amy Thelma, you are a disgrace to yourself."

Returning to the house she joined Betsey on the upper floor. That lady's serenity was visibly disturbed.

"Have you," she asked, "noticed things here?"

"What things?" Amy Thelma asked carelessly.

"Why, the door on the left side of the stairs is locked."

"What of that? The Tilleys sleep there."

"Yes, but it never has been locked before. Always open, and I have been all over the floor. There are three chambers in a row, and now two of them are shut off from us. Do they think we are thieves?"

"Nonsense, dear soul! It is their house, and they have a right to turn the key if they want to. It means nothing."

'Perhaps not, but if there is anything to steal here, I haven't noticed it so far. Ninety-nine cents would furnish the place over again as it is, if laid out at a bargain sale."

The girl laughed, but as Betsey was really aggrieved, she decided to go out again and be free from her complaints. At the head of the stairs she glanced at the locked door, and then an unusual sound stole to her ears. A sob, and beyond the closed door.

She started a little, but turned quickly away and went down. Knowing that Tilley was out of doors, she theorized that his wife was grieving, but found that woman in the kitchen, burnishing cooking utensils and singing softly.

Saying nothing, she passed outside, but it was with a question in her mind. Who had sobbed in the locked room? And why?—why?

Under a tree on the high land she found Tilley using the field-glass, eyeing the coast intently.

"No sign of Mr. Gresham yet, she asked.

"No," replied Tilley, plainly uneasy. "It's high time, and I'm beginning to wonder why he don't come. I hope—— I hope nothing is wrong."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE INTRUDER.

TWO hours later there was acute worry on Long John. Gresham had not returned, and watch of the outlying waters failed to reveal his dory anywhere afloat. He had reached the coast, but after that was a blank and no more.

"Perhaps," Amy Thelma suggested, "he has been delayed."

"He couldn't be," replied Tilley, somberly. "He was to see that young man and post him off to the city to get that new part for the engine. It wouldn't take ten minutes."

"Maybe the young man was not at home."

"He was sure to be at home, and if he wasn't, why, Gresham would leave word for him and come right back.

"Nothing can have happened to him, I hope."

"Something has happened. That's sure. He has got very pressing reasons for being back here, and nothing would stop him if he could get away."

"Is there no way you can go to see what has happened?" she asked.

"No way whatever, for there is no boat, and I'm a poor swimmer. There should be a tender on the Gay Girl's davits, but there is none, as you have noticed. Gresham had ordered a new one to replace one he had lost. No boat whatever. We are marooned here."

No way to get ashore to see what is wrong!" she murmured.

"No way, Miss."

"That is bad."

"It's very bad, and that you can swear to, Miss."

Tilley stood pulling viciously at his buttons, his face a picture of woe. His eyes bored away at the coast, but the two miles of water remained as broad as ever.

"I would try to get the Gay Girl out and risk something," he added, "but Gresham says she would break down wholly before she had gone a hundred fathoms, and any greenhorn can see that. Clean crippled she is, and to break down wholly, afloat, is to lose the motorboat. It will be needed later —badly!"

He wrenched a button away in his perturbation, and shook his head gloomily. And Thelma, watching him, was struck as if by a chill. Plainly, there were more things of importance on Long John than she knew of, and the chill settled down upon her heavily. Her own danger was not the whole of acute life on the island.

Tilley was too restless to remain still long, and he stumped off along the shore without any real motive in mind, to walk and try to ease his burden by motion.

The hours did not bring Gresham. Noon came and passed, and the remaining period of light was more than half spent. North of the shore the sea rolled lazily and crinkled, glittering, almost smiling. But its bosom was unflecked by any boat.

It was a miserable, unhappy day, and the girl grew as much disturbed as Tilley. She looked for Gresham until her eyes ached, and finally tried an experiment that was certain to fail. If she could briefly lose herself in sleep—she lay down and tried, but after half an hour of tossing sprang up and hurried downstairs. Opening the outside door she stopped short. A man, a total stranger, was there, and so near that his foot was on the step just beyond her.

His hat came off with a graceful sweep, and, smiling widely, he nodded in an amiable way.

"Excuse me," he said politely. "I was about to knock, but I am forestalled. I had a question to ask. Do you live here?"

He was being studied while he talked. He was possibly thirty years old, tall, without great strength, well-dressed, and generally neat, and the first impression was that he had no reason to criticise nature for the face given to him. Despite his impressive appearance Amy Thelma did not like him, and the fact that any outsider was there was cause for worry.

"Yes, I live here," she replied coldly.

"How many in the family?" he pursued ingratiatingly.

"Are you taking the census?" she asked curtly.

"In a way, yes, but not wholly. I beg your pardon for my abruptness. I am over from the coast to look about. No offense, I hope. May I ask the name of the family here?"

Tilley pushed his way out of the house and confronted the man with a black look on his face. There was some-

ROSY AND PLUMP

Good Health from Right Food.

"It's not a new food to me," remarked a Va. man, in speaking of Grape-Nuts.

"About twelve months ago my wife was in very bad health, could not keep anything on her stomach. The Doctor recommended milk, half water, but it was not sufficiently nourishing.

"A friend of mine told me one day to try Grape-Nuts and cream. The result was really marvelous. My wife soon regained her usual strength and today is as rosy and plump as when a girl of sixteen.

"These are plain facts and nothing I could say in praise of Grape-Nuts would exaggerate in the least the value of this great food."

Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich. Read "The Road to Wellville," in pkgs. "There's a Reason."

Ever read the above letter? A new one appears from time to time. They are genuine, true, and full of human interest.

thing like a glare in his eyes, and Amy Thelma half expected an immediate collision.

"What d'ye want?" he demanded brusquely.

"I'm looking for something," was the reply, and the stranger smiled more broadly than ever. "My name is Tresselton. Have I your permission to look your house over? It will be worth this to me."

He held out a twenty-dollar banknote and nodded confidently. Amy Thelma expected a new explosion, and was surprised to see Tilley's face soften suddenly. All of his high wrath seemed to ooze away before the power of the money.

"I suppose it's about those burglaries on the coast, that you have failed to get out a search warrant. It isn't my way to help other men do their duty, but if it will be of any use to you—did you say twenty?"

"You are a good guesser, and—twenty it is!"

Tresselton gently shoved his foot over the threshold, then stepped wholly in and tucked the bill into Tilley's hand.

"Mere form," he added. "I know the burglars are not here, but I have my duty to perform, and if you will permit me, why, thank you."

"Law is law," said Tilley, wagging his head wisely. "Follow me!"

They entered the kitchen, leaving Amy Thelma greatly surprised. She had thought better of Tilley than that he could be so easily bought. Indignation came fast upon surprise. Was he proving false to Gresham? Had the twenty dollars so easily undermined his loyalty?

Tresselton seemed wholly without interest in her, so she gave all her thoughts to Gresham and his welfare. She did not believe the late burglaries concerned Tresselton, so only one thing remained—Gresham! Her anger burned warmly against Tilley. She hated treachery, so she hated Tilley.

She watched the stranger in the kitchen. He swept a glance around him, pulled open the door of the only closet and waved a white hand carelessly.

"Next!" he said pleasantly. "Suppose we try the cellar?"

They went, but Amy Thelma did not follow. She had suddenly remembered the locked room upstairs and the sob she had heard. She wondered what would happen when they went up, so she climbed to her own room, alert, thoughtful, belligerent.

Unlike Tilley, she was not to be bought, and if the room developed anything that threatened the master of the Gay Girl, she was resolved to act in his behalf. The secret of the room was not to be trifled with while she had power of action.

Entering her own chamber, she found Betsey standing with uplifted finger, her head bent as if listening.

"Did you hear anything just below?" Betsey demanded. "I don't mean that villain who is searching, but in that room—beyond there. Did you hear anything inside?"

"No."

"I did, a bit ago. A cry, low and soft, but—yes, I heard it. Somebody is in there, but I don't understand."

"Where is Mrs. Tilley?"

"In there too. She went in just after I heard the cry, but all is quiet now.'

"I must see her——"

"Why?"

"She must be warned."

"She knows, she knows. That is sure. She came running up, turned the key and dashed in. Don't go near her. If anything can be done she will do it, but who is in there that sobs and cries——"

'Hush!"

"Footsteps sounded on the stairs and Tilley and Tresselton came up in amicable conversation. It was too late to see Mrs. Tilley, and the girl stood trembling, filled with dread of the unknown, oppressed by she knew not what. The guide flung open the door that had been locked.

"Walk in, sir," he said calmly.

CHAPTER IX.

THE GREAT RISK.

TRESSELTON entered. Mrs. Tilley was ostentatiously scrubbing the window that did not seem to need attention, but she turned and looked at the stranger at her door. Her husband waved a grimy hand and explained.

"Another officer from somewheres to see if we have burglar's goods here. I was thinking of offering him half what he found, but I am not one to joke with the law. My wife, sir."

"Lucky man!" quoth Tresselton. "The window fairly shines. Let me ask your pardon for intruding, especially as I won't be long. As I've told your husband, a mere form. A brief look, you see."

"Why, look and welcome," Mrs. Tilley answered evenly. "If thieves have hidden anything here, I do hope it will be found."

Tresselton looked, and he was more keen of eye than he had been before. The two rooms at the east end of the long house were searched, and then there remained only those of Amy Thelma and Betsey. Fair words did not impress the girl, and Mr. Tresselton had to endure certain sarcastic speeches, but there was no opposition to his search.

He looked, found nothing, and did not seem disappointed. He begged everybody's pardon, and repeated that it was a mere form, after which he went downstairs with the Tilleys in his company.

"That's a wicked man!" declared Betsey. "He smiles easily, but the devil is back of his grins. A vile disposition he has got, and you will find it out if you ask those who know him."

"Oh!" said Amy Thelma, "I wish I had had the managing of him. I would have—but Tilley!" and she made a hostile gesture.

"That Trestle man is walking away," said Betsey, now at the window. "He will soon be clear of the island."

"The sooner the better. Let us hope——"

She stopped short. At the foot of the stairs somebody was laughing deeply, but nervously and harshly. The note was so strange that she looked, wondering. Tilley and his wife were there, and he was shaking with laughter that might possibly have been hearty had it been less tinged with racking emotion.

"Oh!" he finally said, between the other sounds, "he has done something, has he? Found what he was after, eh? Made a hit, eh? Not taken in by a countryman, was he, eh? Tresselton! Why, I'd have broke his back, only our master's orders were, let everybody search if they come, and what he says goes. Tresselton!"

He stamped on the floor and then ground his heel into the spot.

"Not a sound while he was here, my man."

"Not a sound, wife. Asleep, eh?"

"Hush!"

"You are right. I forgot, but my nerves are stinging. I must get untangled from them. This will do it!"

He brought out the twenty-dollar bill and glared at it.

"[illegible] knave gave that to me—to me! Perdition take his money! See what I will do with it!"

He flung it on the floor, and was about to grind it with his heel when Mrs. Tilley checked him.

"No, no, husband! That will do some poor person good. Save it, for though it would be poison for us to keep it, it will harm no needy body. Save it for that use. Tresselton!"

"Tresselton!" echoed Tilley. "But I must get my nerves back."

He walked into the kitchen and took a long drink of water.

Amy Thelma had heard, and she was greatly enlightened. Tilley was not a traitor to Gresham, but, at the expense of his nerves, had proceeded with great duplicity against the visitor, lulling him into error that had served better than open antagonism. This was much, but the rest was more. Tresselton was known and was a foe to them, and that meant a foe to Gresham also. To her the mystery of the old house and the perplexity of the motor-boat welded into one, and revealed her rescuer with hostility afoot against him, and hovering very near.

While she meditated, Betsey was using her sharp eyes, and she came to her friend with news that sent Amy Thelma down to join the Tilleys, her steps quick and her eyes sparkling. She ran into the kitchen, interrupting low conversation.

"That man, that Tresselton, has not left the island!" she cried.

"Eh?" replied Tilley.

"He has met two other men over yonder, and they are putting up a tent, as if to stay."

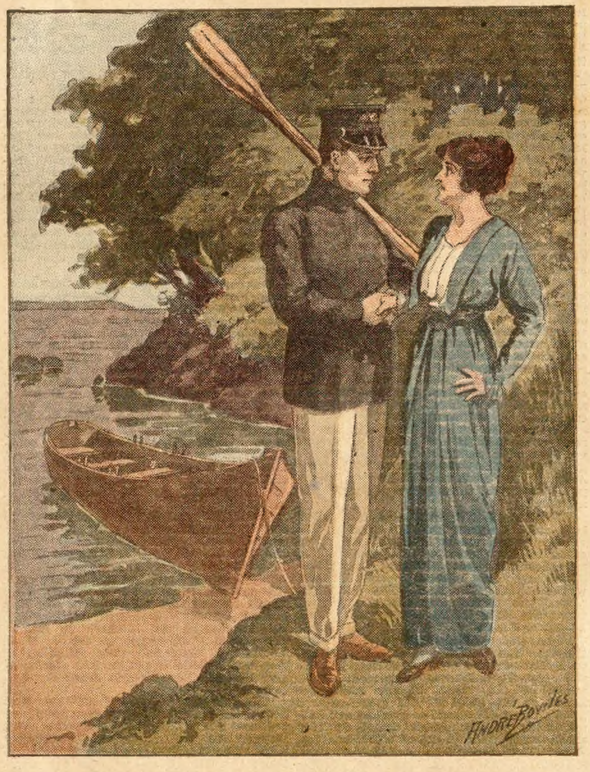
"Ah-h!" breathed her companion, his face growing startled.

"What does that mean?" she continued.

"It means that somebody has got to kill that snake——"

"Husband!" expostulated his wife.

"Going to stay here? I'd like to know why. What deviltry has he afoot? I thought he was too oily when he was here for any good. When that reptile smiles, you want to look out. Going to stay? He wouldn't if Gresham was here."



"What, are you going away?"

"Isn't there some way to get Mr. Gresham back?" Amy Thelma demanded sharply.

"How can it be done? We can't go ashore."

Can't we signal some way?" asked Mrs. Tilley. "It will be dark in a few minutes, and a bonfire will——"

"Do you suppose he would fail to come back if he could get here? He can't come! Something has happened to him. Oh! if I could swim a little better than a hen! He's in trouble and needs a friend, and here we are marooned. Wait! I'll go out and steal Tresselton's boat——"

He clapped his hat on and looked out. Shadows were creeping along the land like the rear guard of the vanished sun. He went out, started in a way opposite to where Tresselton was, and so sought the cover of the high land. Somehow, Amy Thelma had the impression that the attempt was to fail, and she turned again to Mrs. Tilley.

"Is that wretch an enemy of Mr. Gresham?" she demanded.

"Yes, a bitter enemy."

"And we are alone with him!"

Mrs. Tilley leaned against the table and fell into thought. Amy Thelma watched her closely. Under a motherly exterior the woman showed unusual firmness, and the fact that she was so unstrung was proof that great danger threatened.

"I wish," she said presently, "that I knew just what he intends. He has come here, and that shows that he knows, but—— what does he intend to do?"

The girl waited, hoping to hear more, but firm in her purpose to refrain from prying into Gresham's affairs. Much she wondered what this mystery was, and what the hostility of Tresselton meant. She was not to learn then, for Mrs. Tilley suddenly gave her a side look and relapsed into silence.

Half an hour later Tilley reappeared, wet to the knees and gloomy of face.

"There ain't any boat to steal!" he announced. "Finding none along shore, I crept close and listened. I heard only a little, but they were put on this island from a sailboat, and intend to stay a while. We've got them quartered on us, and they will be peering and prying——"

"There isn't a thing for them to find," interrupted his wife, quickly.

"Fact!" Tilley agreed. "Not a thing."

Ten minutes later Amy Thelma was standing at the window of her room, gazing into the night. Darkness was over Long John. Farther away the beacon light blinked on the mainland, the land to which Gresham had gone. What had happened to him? Badly needed, he was absent. His enemy was at hand, and Tilley could not swim.

"I wonder," mused Amy Thelma. "It's a long way, but——"

An hour later she wrote a brief note and pinned it to her pillow. Then she stole softly downstairs and out of doors. Her quick-moving feet took her to the north shore. Nobody was to be seen. She cast off the long cloak she wore, thrust it into a waterproof bag she had brought, and strapped it to her shoulders. A moment later she was in the water, swimming away from Long John.

Wide lay that reach of water, and its dangers were unknown to her, but Gresham was needed, and she was there to swim to the mainland. A wide, wide reach, black and sullen, possibly shark-haunted, possibly now ridden by lawless men. A wide, wide reach, a place where there was no resting place for weary arms and muscles, nor for overtaxed lungs, a distance longer than ever she had swam before—but Gresham was needed!

Deliberately, skillfully her arms moved, and the frowning shape of Long John shrank a little to the rear. Deliberately, never yielding to the impulse to hasten thus early in the great trial, husbanding her strength, for it was all that lay between her and drowning, she swam on.

The stars looked down upon her, dim in the fleece-laden sky, and perhaps there was sympathy in their half-veiled eyes. There was none in the water. It rolled deliberately, sulkily, hostile in its powers, and its faint voice was like a gloating gurgle.

"I'll get you, I'll get you!" it seemed to say, but it was in no hurry. Patiently biding its time, it sang the old song and watched. When her strength failed, then—then it would reap a harvest, as it had reaped many times before. Dead men had lain in its depths, and there was room for a slender girl.

A wide, wide reach, but—Gresham was needed. And the girl he had once saved was swimming for the mainland.

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* * *

Couldn't Escape.

"Won't you sing something?" he asked when they were alone together.

"Please excuse me," she replied. "I don't feel like singing this evening. I would much rather sit here and have you talk to me. Tell me about yourself."

"There's nothing interesting to say about me. I have not had an exciting career."

"But I should like to hear about your work, your ideals, and all that, you know."

"Why do you care what my ideals are?"

"I am always interested in every man's ideals. Men are so interesting. They always have some aim in life aside from marriage. Girls generally think only of that. It seems so silly and uninteresting."

"Marriage?"

"Yes."

"Haven't you ever thought of getting married?"

"Oh, if you insist on dragging in the subject, I suppose I may as well give in first as last. But what made you think I cared for you?"

* * *

Absent-Minded.

Among seven noted men who were to speak at the opening exercises of a new school was a professor well known for his lapses of memory. But his speech was clear that night, and as he seated himself his loving wife felt that he had fully earned the burst of applause that followed, and she clapped her little hands enthusiastically. Then her cheeks crimsoned.

"Did you see anything amusing about the close of my address, my dear?" asked the professor as they started for home.

"It seemed as if I heard sounds suggestive of merriment about me."

"Well, dear," said she, "of all the people who applauded your address, you clapped the loudest and longest."

THE WAR DRUMS OF HIS FATHERS

By Arthur Chapman

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CHAPTER IV.

FOR several days Miss Bettina Angell had been witnessing strange sights on the vast open range, where the reservation cattle round-up was being conducted. The tribal herd of the Absarokes was being divided into individual allotments, and Agent Williams had impressed all the available Indian cowboys into service. In addition, all the cattle outfits that operated under leases on the reservation had their round-up crews on hand to attend to separating their brands from the I D cattle, the brand of the Department of the Interior. Forty skilled cowboys under Foreman Andy Gale were looking after the work.

The occasion had been turned into an outing for those who had never seen cowboys at work. Bettina and Miss Williams were given a small tent of their own. "Dude" horses, as the cowboys called their pet ponies, had been provided, and were roped every morning when the horse cavvy was brought in, and turned over to the young women.

The routine of the day's work had an intense fascination for Bettina. To rise from a tarpaulin bed, spread on the hard ground, and find that she had had a night of dreamless, refreshing slumber, was in itself something novel. The breakfasts in the cool, crisp Montana atmosphere of early morning, the thunder of hoofs as the wranglers drove up the saddle stock, and the exciting struggles of man and beast as the cowboys roped and saddled their mounts and had the usual bucking performance—all these prepared one for an interesting and exciting day.

When the cowboys had started out to "ride circle," and the camp was left in quiet, save for the rattle of the cook's dishes, there were glorious opportunities for long horseback rides across the plains and into the foothills. Then the riders would come stringing back into camp, driving the bellowing steers in front of them, and soon would come the work of cutting out and branding. The reek of round-up battle never lost its interest and its thrill. There was no moment of "sag" in this plains drama. The clashing of horns, the bellowing of steers, the bawling of calves, the shouts of the perspiring cowboys who were roping, branding, or "rastling" cattle—all these things kept Bettina interested and made the days pass in swift procession.

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Captain Keith usually accompanied Bettina and Miss Williams on their rides. He showed them where to angle for trout that were found in a dashing stream in the foothills, and hardly a day passed that the trio did not come back to camp with good catches of fish.

On the tenth day of the round-up, when the outfits had worked the western part of the reservation and were well into the foothills, Andy Gale approached Captain Keith and Agent Williams.

"I ain't any view-with-alarmist, Cap'n," said the foreman, with the military salute which was the envy of all those punchers who had not seen service with "the boss" in Cuba.

"What is it, Andy—isn't our cut up to the mark?" asked the Captain.

"Our cut is all right," went on Andy, reflectively, "but it's this here Young Otter business. The Injun cowboys are nearly all plumb locoed over the messiah game he's 'working'. I've seen for several days that they have been easy, and last night a bunch of 'em sneaked away and held a big powwow. This mornin' I wormed it out of some of the weak-hearted ones that they're about ready to break and join Young Otter's camp in the hills. They say he's seen great visions and is makin' mighty medicine on Cloudy Peak. He's been namin' a lot more prophecies, and they have all been comin' true, reg'lar as clockwork. The other day he caps the climax by sayin' that he'd call down a thunderbolt and kill a lot of cattle for food, and blamed if the thing didn't come off just as he said. I've seen enough of his spooky work in Cuby to know that there's somethin' uncanny about that Injun. If he can make a cold shiver run along my spine, you can imagine what he's doin' to these Injuns. We'll be lucky if we can pull our red cowpunchers through this round-up without havin' every one of 'em desert to Young Otter."

The Captain looked thoughtful as he rode away and joined Bettina, who was waiting, with her fishing rod in hand.

"Well, Mister Incomplete and Dilatory Angler," she exclaimed chidingly, "don't you know that time and trout wait for no man?"

"Don't scold till you find what a treat is in store for you," said the Captain, his brow clearing under her raillery. "I'm going to show you the finest place in the mountains for trout fishing. I don't believe any one except myself knows where it is. Too bad Millie can't go along," he added, expressing a regret regarding Miss Williams' absence which he did not feel.

From the well-defined road that led through the foothills, they soon turned to a little-used wagon road that led up the heavily-timbered mountain. The music of the trout stream could be heard at the side of this grass-grown road. The saddle leather creaked not unmusically as the horses toiled up the steep slope. The breeze of late morning, warm and caressing, made flickering patches of sunlight and shadow on the trail, as the heads of the giant pine swayed rhythmically. Chipmunks scolded at the side of the trail, and bright-colored flowers peered everywhere.

As they rode, Captain Keith looked at Bettina with unrestrained devotion, but she was too much taken up with the charm of her surroundings and the new vistas that were opened by every turn of the trail to notice his frank gaze. The ardor that had burned within the Captain's breast during those long months in Cuba and at Montauk was almost over-powering now, under these blue, cloud-flecked Montana skies. It was a day for lovers and for loving, yet, like Orlando, he felt weights hanging upon his tongue, and could not speak the very thoughts he desired most to make articulate.

Suddenly, at a turn in the trail, the Captain's horse shied violently, and Bettina's horse also became almost unmanageable.

"What's this!" exclaimed the Captain, as he spurred his snorting mount toward several objects that were waving in the breeze at the side of the trail.

"Cattle hides—sixteen of them!" he exclaimed. "By George! This must be the place where Young Otter's latest prophecy came to pass! They say he called down the lightning to furnish meat for his followers, and that an obedient thunderbolt obligingly slew sixteen oxen. Mighty decent of him to put the hides here where they'll cure, and where Uncle Sam can come and collect them."

The first instinct of the Captain was to examine the tracks left by Young Otter and his accompanying horsemen.

"Every one of those horses was unshod," he said to Bettina, "so it's evident that none of our cowboys have joined the young messiah as yet. Our trail goes to the right, anyway, so there's no reason why we should lose a day's fishing, unless Young Otter has directed another prophecy at the trout in the stream, and has had them all served up to his followers."

Leading the horses into the woods at the side of the trail, the Captain tied them securely, and then conducted Bettina to the edge of a large pool that had been formed by a beaver dam.

"Here is where the beaver have made the finest fishing spot in the world," he whispered, as he deftly threaded the lines through the standing guides of their rods. "Take my advice, and put on a royal coachman, with a gray hackle for a dropper fly. I'll go downstream and cross over and do my fishing from the other side."

After the rod adjustments were completed to his satisfaction, the Captain made his way a short distance downstream, and waved an adieu as he crossed the rushing water and prepared to whip the stream from the other bank.

Bettina turned to the pool, which mirrored several white clouds. She swung her bamboo rod with the wrist-motion of the trained angler, and the tiny flies swished over her head and alighted on the smooth surface of the pool. Instantly there was an angry swirl that gave Bettina a start, and the flies were drawn underneath the surface. With the instinct of the born angler, Bettina had given the swift backward jerk of wrist and hand necessary to set the hook, and she knew instantly that she had been successful, and that the fish that had struck her fly was a monster.

For twenty minutes Bettina battled to keep her quarry away from the tangle of submerged branches at the base of the beaver dam. Finally she drew the fish to shore, and, with a deft scoop of her landing net, brought him to her creel, as gamy a four-pound trout as ever yielded to the lure of a royal coachman.

Glancing to the other shore, Bettina saw the Captain capturing a fish that looked like the twin brother of her own. Congratulations were exchanged by signal, and then came more casts and more exciting battles, until finally Bettina noticed that the strap of her creel was cutting into her shoulder cruelly, and that she could not put the cover down, so full was the stout basket of willow.

"Old Ike Walton never neglected to eat, so why should we?" asked a voice from the underbrush, and Bettina turned and saw the Captain, with a creel as full as her own.

"I'm coming back tomorrow," she said, "to get that last big one I lost. He's right down there where that log juts over the dam. I've seen him down there in the depths, and I know he weighs five pounds if he weighs an ounce. What is more, I know he's been laughing at me, and several times he has struck at my choicest flies, just to show his contempt."

"He's as good as dead," said the Captain, gravely. "We'll get him tomorrow without fail. Meantime, let's see what Dutchy had put in our saddle pockets."

It was well past noon when they finished their lunch and started for camp. As they led their horses out on the trail, near the hides, they heard a strange, throbbing noise, borne faintly to their ears on the wind.

"Dance tom-toms!" said the Captain. Then, as he caught the strange rhythm of the drums, his face became serious.

"I haven't heard music like that for years," he said. "Not since I was up in the Sioux country when an uprising was planned. I must look into it. Williams will want to know about it, I'm sure."

"Let me go with you," said Bettina. "A thrilling adventure will just round out this day of pleasure."

Fastening their horses in a thicket, after a short ride, and casting off their heavy creels, the Captain and Bettina stole up the trail that had been followed by Young Otter and his companions a few hours before. The sound of the dance drums grew louder as they advanced. Creeping to the top of a ridge from which a view of the Indians' camp was commanded, the Captain took a look through his field-glasses and motioned Bettina to creep to his side.

"Look!" he said, and thrust the glasses into her hand.

Bettina saw in the center of the Indian camp a sight that caused her to turn sick with horror. The braves were grouped about the great lodge pole from which the rawhide rope depended. The drummers were sounding the tom-toms, and their voices were rising in a frenzied song that had been handed down to them by their forefathers through the long ages. About the pole was dancing and writhing a figure, naked, except for a breech clout. Blood was streaming from the breast of the dancer, and Bettina saw that two rawhide thongs were attached to his back. The dancer pulled a great buffalo skull behind him. Occasionally he flung himself backward, until he almost hung suspended by the thongs which had been run through his breast.

As the dancer swung toward her, Bettina saw the face of Young Otter, set with agony and streaked with blood, but with the fire of religious fervor shining from his eyes.

Putting his hand on her shoulder, the Captain drew her away. He saw that she was shuddering and weak, and he helped her to her feet and assisted her over the rough ground to their horses.

"We must hurry back and tell the agent," he said. "That dance means trouble, and Williams must telegraph for troops as soon as he can get back to the agency. I don't suppose you know it," he added, "but those tortures which Young Otter was taking together are plenty for the average brave when they are taken singly. Young Otter didn't need any such certificate of bravery, as far as I'm concerned, but among his own people he will be nothing short of a demigod now. After he proves such physical hardihood under torture, the old Indians will rally to his standard, just as the young bucks have done. Then we will have to fight for our lives."

CHAPTER V.

NEWS has a mysterious way of reaching the uttermost parts of an Indian reservation. There is the thud of pony hoofs in distant places, where no telegraph key or telephone bell ever sounded. Smoke columns curl innocently enough against the sky, and mirrors flash. Soon the entire tribe is acquainted with the news of the hour—the death of the agent, the "big sing" that has been called by the medicine man, or whatever else a white community would feature in glaring lines of newspaper print.

When the Captain and Bettina reached the round-up camp they found that the news of the torture dance had preceded them. Camp was being broken, and the mess wagon was filled with the cook's belongings. The horse cavvy had been brought up by Wrang and a frightened herder, and was milling about in a rope corral, a hundred yards from the camp.

"I'm sure glad to see you back, Captain Keith and Miss Angell," said Andy Gale, who was outwardly calm, but evidently worried deep down. "We haven't an Injun cowboy left in the place. There was a few smoke signals over your way, and the hull crowd lit out as if the sheriff of Hades County was after 'em. Smoky read the signals, or we might not have knowed what was comin' off. He was brought up in the tribe, and there ain't no kinks of their sign talk or smoke signalin' that he don't savvy. He and Milly have ridden on to warn the agency. We're bu'stin' camp in a hurry, and we're goin' to leave a lot of truck right here rather than delay things by tryin' to pick it all up. If you hadn't showed up when you did, I was goin' to come back after you. This reservation ain't no place for white people to be wanderin' around on from now on, you mark me!"

Captain Keith assisted in the final arrangements, and soon the mess wagon was on its homeward journey, with the Captain riding ahead with the foreman and Bettina, and the horse cavvy bringing up the rear.

"Now I get some idea of the feelings that Custer and his men must have had when they traversed these lonely plains with danger on every hand," said Bettina to the Captain, in a low voice, as they jogged on ahead of the wagon, with the foreman twenty yards in the lead, his rifle swinging easily in the hollow of his right arm.

"Custer and his men did not have any fears for women and children," said the Captain, "and that must have made all the difference in the world."

Bettina, suppressing a shudder at the thought of what might happen to the families at the agency, rode on in silence.

As the cavalcade clattered up to the agency, in a dust-veil of its own making, it was plain to see that the news of the threatened uprising of the Indians had been brought by Millie and Smoky. Men, women, and children had flocked to the agent's house. Riders were out, gathering in the missing members of families. One cowboy had come clattering in with the school-teacher on the horse behind him. The teacher had been sketching, and, her horse having wandered a short distance away, no time had been wasted in catching the animal. An alarmed crowd of women had gathered in the big livingroom at the agent's home. One or two children had been sobbing, but had been quickly hushed by their mothers.

"It looks bad," said Major Williams to Captain Keith, drawing him aside so the women might not hear. "The Indians have cut the wires on both sides of us. I can't get a word out of the agency tonight. There is no doubt that they mean to strike—and to strike hard and quickly. What show is there for us to stand a siege in this house, Captain?"

"About as much show as there would be in a paper bandbox," said Captain Keith, glancing with a practiced eye about the flimsy rooms. "If one of the old log houses had been allowed to stand at the agency, we might be able to make a defensive fight, but these new houses the Government has put up out of pine boards can be swept from one end to the other with the high-power rifles the Indians carry."

"And there isn't even a cellar where

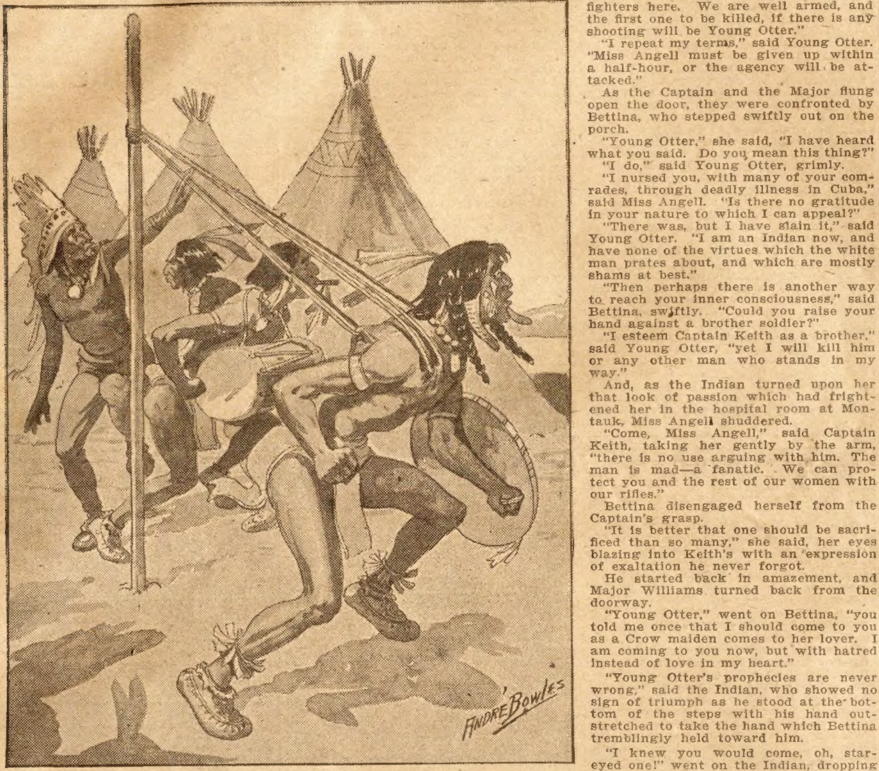
we can put the women and children," groaned the agent.

Captain Keith laid a restraining hand upon his arm, as Bettina approached. Apparently she had not heard any of the conversation, but the Captain, knowing of her determination and bravery, determined to be frank with her.

"You've been a nurse in the army, and the truth isn't going to upset you the way it would most of those other women over there," said the Captain. "There's no disguising the fact that things could hardly be worse for us. The wires are are cut, and probably we'll be besieged here. One volley poured into this flimsy building, and we would have to surrender."

"Most of the Indian police have joined Young Otter," said the agent. "The chief, Bad Medicine, and Fighting Bear, his lieutenant, are still with us, and can be depended upon, but Pawing Buffalo, and his son Bear-in-the-Cloud have both disappeared from police quarters and are probably with Young Otter now."

"May I suggest," said the Captain, "that we send a good rider, preferably Andy Gale, for aid? He can get away to the west all right, and ought to be able to reach the Meyers ranch on the edge of the reservation by morning."



Young Otter in the supreme test.

"I've already sent Clay Walker on that very mission," said the agent. "Moller suggested it. Moller's game. He's brought over a whole arsenal of firearms from his store."

"Good!" ejaculated the Captain. "We've got to post sentries to warn us of the approach of the Indians, and put our defenses in the best possible shape here. After that, we can only wait and hope for the best."

The waiting, through the fading October afternoon, was the hardest part. Several of the women showed signs of breaking down under the strain. Bettina busied herself among these and the children, who had huddled into little groups and were prepared to cry at the least expression of concern they caught on the faces of their elders.

About dusk there was the faint sound of a rifle shot, and then several more. Hoofs were heard drumming on the road to the south, and one of the cowboys dashed up in front of the agency headquarters, calling out, as he flung himself from the saddle:

"They're coming!"

Captain Keith motioned to Bettina, and she went with him to a broad window overlooking the road. Fluttering war bonnets filled the roadway as if by magic. Hardly had the last of the outposts, alarmed by the cowboy's shot and the volley that it had drawn in return, been admitted to the house, when the little park was filled with Indian ponies and the agency resounded with the shrill whoops of warriors.

In spite of her natural terror, Bettina could hardly restrain a gasp of admiration. Many of the Indians who had joined Young Otter had fought against the Cheyennes and Sioux, and other hereditary enemies of the Crows, in long campaigns previous to the arrival of the white men. Some of them had served as scouts with celebrated white generals in the campaigns in which the army blue had figured.

"By Jove! Look at those old men in front," said Captain Keith. "See those long, lancelike sticks they are shaking—those sticks with the eagle feathers attached in a long line from top to bottom. Those are coup sticks. Each feather indicates some Indian deed of bravery on the battlefield, generally taking the scalp of a dead enemy while under fire. There must be fifty feathers on some of those sticks. There is the last of the Indian Old Guard—the last that any white people will see."

Even though it was like admiring one's own executioner, Captain Williams could not forbear taking in the array in the park with soldierly satisfaction. His eyes sparkled at the sight of the lean, bronzed warriors, painted and armed for battle, and with their wiry ponies snorting and plunging in excitement.

There was a brief consultation among the Indians in the park. Then, while a chorus of shrill yells arose from the younger men, Young Otter stepped from the circle and approached the house with his right arm extended over his head, his palm outward, the sign for a parley. Arrived at the gate, he paused and called out:

"Major Williams and Captain Keith, a word with you, please."

"He wants to parley," said the agent. "Had we better go out, or do you think there is treachery?"

"No," said Captain Keith, starting for the door, "we'll be safe enough. Whatever faults he has, Young Otter is not underhanded. Spotted Snake and some of those other Indians fight in the dark, but Young Otter is always in the open. Besides, we may be able to persuade him into giving up this rash enterprise of his."

Opening the door just wide enough to admit them singly, the agent and the Captain stepped out on the front porch, where they joined Young Otter at the steps.

Young Otter cut Major Williams short almost at the first word.

"There's no use giving me any advice about this thing, Major," he said, "nor will I listen to any persuasion from you, Captain. I am here to dictate terms."

"What are they?" demanded Captain Keith.

"I am the leader of these Indians," said Young Otter, with a comprehensive sweep of his arm toward the warlike array in the park. "Give up just one person to us, and the agency will not be harmed. If you fail to deliver Miss Angell to me in half an hour, I will have your house shot to pieces, with everybody in it. You cannot get help here before two days. By that time the ruins of the agency will have ceased to smoke, and every building here will be dead charcoal."

"You'll hang for this, Young Otter!" exclaimed Captain Keith, with difficulty restraining himself from striking down the Indian.

"Never! I shall die, but it will be a glorious death," said Young Otter. "I have had visions of the end. Also I have had visions of the power that will come to the Crows when Manitou smiles down on Miss Angell in the tepee of the prophet of the Absarokes. I repeat my terms: Miss Angell within half an hour, or death to all of you."

Turning angrily from Young Otter in order that he might not provoke bloodshed by killing him, Captain Keith strode to the door, followed by Major Williams.

"You know that such a monstrous proposition is impossible, Young Otter," said the Captain. "We cannot give up Miss Angell or any other woman in this house. We have a dozen good gun fighters here. We are well armed, and the first one to be killed, if there is any shooting will be Young Otter."

"I repeat my terms," said Young Otter. "Miss Angell must be given up within a half-hour, or the agency will be attacked."

As the Captain and the Major flung open the door, they were confronted by Bettina, who stepped swiftly out on the porch.

"Young Otter," she said, "I have heard what you said. Do you mean this thing?"

"I do," said Young Otter, grimly.

"I nursed you, with many of your comrades, through deadly illness in Cuba," said Miss Angell. "Is there no gratitude in your nature to which I can appeal?"

"There was, but I have slain it," said Young Otter. "I am an Indian now, and have none of the virtues which the white man prates about, and which are mostly shams at best."

"Then perhaps there is another way to reach your inner consciousness," said Bettina, swiftly. "Could you raise your hand against a brother soldier?"

"I esteem Captain Keith as a brother," said Young Otter, "yet I will kill him or any other man who stands in my way."

And, as the Indian turned upon her that look of passion which had frightened her in the hospital room at Montauk, Miss Angell shuddered.

"Come, Miss Angell," said Captain Keith, taking her gently by the arm, "there is no use arguing with him. The man is mad—a fanatic. We can protect you and the rest of our women with our rifles."

Bettina disengaged herself from the Captain's grasp.

"It is better that one should be sacrificed than so many," she said, her eyes blazing into Keith's with an expression of exaltation he never forgot.

He started back in amazement, and Major Williams turned back from the doorway.

"Young Otter," went on Bettina, "you told me once that I should come to you as a Crow maiden comes to her lover. I am coming to you now, but with hatred instead of love in my heart."

"Young Otter's prophecies are never wrong," said the Indian, who showed no sign of triumph as he stood at the bottom of the steps with his hand outstretched to take the hand which Bettina tremblingly held toward him.

"I knew you would come, oh, star-eyed one!" went on the Indian, dropping into the grandiloquent phraseology of the Indian orator. "You will not be sorry that you have made this sacrifice and have saved those women and children in there. Now, with you in my lodge, as I have told my people, the visions that have been granted to me on the mountain top shall be fulfilled, and the Crows shall come into their own, and the beaver and the buffalo shall return."

Swiftly Young Otter led Bettina down the steps and toward the gate. Captain Keith clapped his hand on his hip, and then, with a curse, remembered that he had laid aside his weapon before joining Young Otter in the conference. Madly he started to dash after the Indian and Bettina, but Major Williams flung his arms about the Captain's waist and called for help. Andy Gale, and several other cowboys who had been posted near the door, ready to open fire in case of treachery, flung themselves upon the Captain and dragged him within the house.

"It's best to let her go," said Moller. "We'd never have given her up, but, now that she's made the sacrifice herself, we can't bring her back and shed the blood of these women and children in here. I never saw anything so game in my life as what that young woman has done. The soldiers will be here day after tomorrow, and then we can camp on Young Otter's trail and get the girl back."

But Keith, flinging off his friendly captors, snatched a rifle from Moller's hand, and, running to the door, flung it wide open.

"It's no use, Captain," said Moller. "They're gone!"

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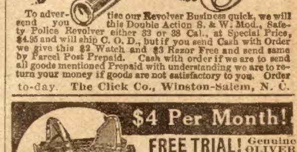
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And as Keith dashed out on the porch, rifle in hand, he saw that the park which, only a moment before, had been vibrant with fluttering war bonnets and coup sticks, was as empty and echoless as if it had never held an Indian.

CHAPTER VI.

When Bettina awoke next morning, it was with a strange sense of unfamiliarity with her surroundings. The lodge poles of a tepee sloped above her. From the shadows that played on the canvas, she knew she was in the forest, and the sun was up. Turning her head, she saw a little chipmunk gazing at her with a curiosity which almost expressed itself in words. At the movement, the little animal skipped under the tent and Bettina was left alone.

Then the recollection of the events of the preceding day surged over her, and Bettina shuddered. She remembered the long, hard ride, amid the grim warriors, whose quavering war songs chilled her blood. At her side had ridden Young Otter, silent, but with a strange look of exaltation on his face. Over miles of plains the little cavalcade had galloped. Then Bettina remembered long stretches of gloomy forest, with the rough trail leading ever upward. Finally the barking of dogs heralded their arrival at camp. Into a large tepee, in the midst of a circle of tents, Bettina had been led by a pleasant-faced young woman, whom Young Otter introduced as Clara Bear-in-the-Cloud, wife of one of the policemen who had deserted the reservation force to become one of the young messiah's retainers.

Bettina's attendant spoke excellent English, and her smile was winning. She was a Carlisle girl, and a more admirably pleasant and sympathetic companion could not be desired. Now she had flung back the flap to the tepee and stood looking in, the sunshine making an aureole about her pleasant face.

"Have you slept well?" inquired Clara.

"For an hour or two," said Bettina, still trying to collect her senses. She had flung herself fully dressed on the bed, and now she arose.

"Come with me," said Mrs. Bear-in-the-Cloud, "and we'll have breakfast."

Through a beautiful grove of pines Bettina followed the Indian girl. A hundred yards or more from the camp they came to a little stream, moss-lined and pebble-bottomed. Here Bettina bathed her face and hands, and from beneath her blanket Mrs. Bear-in-the-Cloud brought forth soap, a towel, and brush and comb.

Having made her toilet, Bettina looked about her. There was nothing to be heard from the camp. No one would have suspected that an Indian village existed such a short distance away. Only the babbling of the stream fell on Bettina's ears.

From a chamois bag, hanging about her neck, Bettina took several rings, which sparkled in the sunlight. She held them toward Mrs. Bear-in-the-Cloud.

"All yours," she said, "if you'll let me escape through these woods."

Mrs. Bear-in-the-Cloud, with her pleasant smile expanding, slowly shook her head.

"You couldn't get away," she said. "Those men back there are the greatest trailers in the world. Besides, Young Otter would kill me if I came back to camp without you."

Bettina slowly put the rings back in the bag.

"You stay with me and keep quiet, and you will be all right, I guess," said Mrs. Bear-in-the-Cloud. "Young Otter thinks too much of you to harm you, and besides, he is having great visions, and is so much wrapped up in these that he is not likely to pay attention to anything else. He just went and got you because you were part of one of his visions. It's the other Indians in camp you have to watch—bad Indians like Spotted Snake and some others."

Realizing the hopelessness of attempting to escape from so many skilled followers of forest trails, Bettina turned back to camp with her companion, for whom she was beginning to feel a sisterly affection. There were few women and children in the camp. Evidently this was a camp of warriors. The tepees were closed and silent. From far away came the throb of tom-toms.

"Some more big medicine," said Mrs. Bear-in-the-Cloud, listening a moment.

Going into the tepee, the Indian girl soon had an inviting meal spread on a shawl. From a fire nearby she scraped the coals. Underneath was a heavy, double iron baking pan known as a Dutch oven. Opening it, Mrs. Bear-in-the-Cloud took out some steaming bread. From a coffee pot at one end of the fire she poured an appetizing draught, and, at the odor of the berry, Bettina's appetite gave her a sharp reminder.

"Sit down and eat," said the Indian girl. "The men will not be back for an hour or more. It is their custom to make this medicine to the sun every morning. It is through the sun Young Otter says he gets his power as a messiah."

During her months of training as an army nurse, it had been Bettina's habit to sink her troubles in the troubles of others. She found this a doubly helpful practice, aiding the giver fully as much as the receiver. Alone and unprotected in an Indian camp, whither she had been taken virtually by abduction, and where she had little reason to look forward to anything but a fate worse than death, still this habit clung to her. She turned in sisterly fashion to the smiling, affable young Indian woman. For nearly an hour the red girl talked to the white, drawn on by skillful questioning. Bettina learned about her companion's life among the tepee folk on the reservation, her separation from her parents to attend school, with brief glimpses of her mother on Sundays after the squaw had ridde fifty miles on her pony to see her only daughter. Then came the total separation, when the Indian girl was sent away to the boarding-school in Kansas, and finally to the big school at Carlisle. The Indian mother died while her girl was away—her death brought about, past question, by her separation.

"But it's kidnaping!" cried Bettina, as the girl told how she had been torn from the arms of her shrieking mother and put on the train.

"Yes, but it is the rule of your Government," said the girl, simply. "And what good has it all been—all the teaching I have received? I can talk English nearly as correctly as you. I can sew, bake, keep house—and yet I have been thrown back here on the reservation in the midst of the very life which your Government has said would not do for me as a child. My people made fun of my learning and my dresses. I could not go out in the big world and find employment among your people. You draw the color line so closely—you white folks."

Bettina, her eyes full of tears, leaned over and clasped the hand of the Indian girl, who spoke in a low voice and with downcast eyes.

"It is not strange, is it," continued Clara, "that I gave up the struggle and went back to the moccasins and the blankets of my own people and let my hair down and painted my scalp and face and married one of the men, out there, dancing with Wahpootka-Naks at this moment?"

As the Indian girl pointed to the door of the tepee, it was opened, and Spotted Snake looked in. Mrs. Bear-in-the-Cloud, terrified, sank down, as far away from the Indian as she could get. Bettina faced Spotted Snake calmly enough, though he was painted hideously, and a war bonnet of eagle feathers swept from his brown to his feet.

Spotted Snake spoke roughly to the Indian girl, who looked at him as if hypnotized. After he had spoken a full minute or two, he paused. Then he spoke to Clara again sharply.

"He wants me to tell you—something," said the Indian girl, with an effort, and without removing her eyes from Spotted Snake's face. "He wants me to tell you that—now you belong to him—and the rest of the tribe—that is, if Wahpootka-Naks cannot take you by force from Spotted Snake. He says the braves would have killed all at the agency last night, but Young Otter made them believe that it would be good medicine to get you for the messiah's bride. But Spotted Snake watched last night, and he saw Young Otter stand guard outside your tepee all night. He says Young Otter lost his claim on you, and that you belong to any one who is strong enough to take you from the messiah. That is why Spotted Snake has come here."

As the Indian girl finished, Spotted Snake stepped forward and put his hand on Bettina's shoulder. She writhed out of his grasp and darted through the tepee door. As Spotted Snake followed her, he was caught in the grasp of Young Otter, who, with half a dozen of the leading men of the tribe, had been standing outside.

Not a word was said by either of the Indians as they closed in an embrace which meant death. Young Otter's wounds on back and breast burst open, and blood streamed down his body. Soon both Indians were red from the waist up. Apparently, however, the opening of his wounds had no lessening influence on Young Otter's strength. Spotted Snake endeavored in vain to throw him. Young Otter easily broke the grip of the more heavily built Indian. The young messiah knew all the Indian tricks in Spotted Snake's repertory. In addition, he had picked up a remarkable knowledge of boxing and wrestling, during his years at the white men's schools. The two Indians writhed a few moments in the bright sunlight, and Bettina, half-fainting, saw Spotted Snake fumble for his knife. But, just as his hand closed on the hilt, the hand of his adversary shot forward in a crashing blow which had been picked up in gymnasium boxing bouts. Knowing nothing of boxing, Spotted Snake fairly thrust his jaw in the way of the smiting fist. The blow made Spotted Saake reel forward dizzily, with arms inert. Young Otter's arms closed about the older Indian's body, and seemed fairly to sink into flesh and bone. The next moment Spotted Snake whirled in the air. He smote the ground with a crashing concussion, and lay in one of the absurd poses that men strike only in death. His back had been broken by his terrific fall.

Young Otter turned from the figure with little emotion.

"In my vision yesterday I was told that this thing should be done," he said to the other Indians. "You heard what this traitor sought to do. He would undo all the work of your messiah by depriving him of his spiritual helpmeet. I have told you that it is through this woman and myself that the great medicine will come to the Crows. Any Indian who seeks to offer her violence is endangering the future of the Absaroke tribe. You can only regain the beaver and the buffalo and get back your old hunting grounds, by listening to the voice of your messiah. This woman I shall take with me to the top of the great peak tonight, lest there be more Spotted Snakes, with evil hearts, who would undo the work of your leader. We shall camp among the snows, and I shall fast. Bide here three days. You will be safe. At the end of that time, if Manitou so directs, this woman shall be my bride."

Clara interpreted Young Otter's words to Bettina in a whisper. As Young Otter pointed to the great mountain whose white top towered far away, Bettina gasped in terror. On that lonely mountain top, what chance would there be for her to be found by her friends from the agency.

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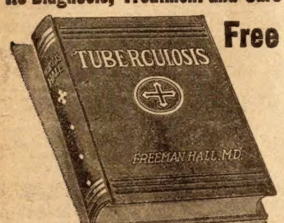

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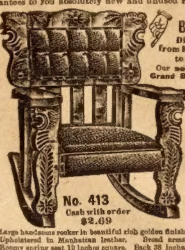

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Facing Mexican Perils

Or, The Prisoner of Castle La Garcia

By Lucius Withers

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CHAPTER XII.

FERNANDEZ was taken wholly by surprise when Constance fainted in his arms. For a moment he stood gazing sheepishly about him, supporting the girl's dead weight and confused by a situation as unexpected as it was disconcerting.

After the passage of a moment the young man lifted the girl into his arms, and crossing the room, laid her on the couch. He then hurriedly left the apartment, reappearing a few moments later with a glass of water and a decanter of brandy in his hands. He forced some of the liquor between her lips, and then chafed her forehead and hands, first with the spirits and then with water. Anxiety was written plainly on Fernandez's face.

In a few moments Constance came out of her faint. She looked up, shuddered, and turned her face away from the man who knelt beside the couch. Her expression was one of hate and disgust. A flash of pain swept across the countenance of the Secretary to the Provisional President. He quickly rose to his feet and passed out of the room, careful to close and lock the door behind him. At that moment perhaps the recording angel placed a shining mark after the name of Lopez Fernandez. Surely that shining mark must have looked strange to angelic vision, set as it was among so many black ink-smudges. But President Huerta's assistant was not wholly bad. No one is wholly evil, outside of time-worn, creaking melodrama.

For a long time Constance lay quite still. Then it came to her that just now she had walked close to the edge of a perilous cliff, and that but for the innate honor and decency of the man she scorned, she would have fallen into the Pit Disastrous. At that moment Constance came very near to cherishing a kindly thought for her captor. Slowly the tides of life in the girl resumed their normal beating, and she remembered with a quick sensation of pleasure her discovery of the spiral staircase behind the heavy tapestry. In her panic of fright before she fainted in Fernandez's arms, all thought of the secret stairway had been blotted out. But the return of the memory gave the girl new hope.

If for a brief interval Constance felt not unkindly toward the secretary, her hate soon resumed sway when she remembered the man's brutal kisses. This memory sickened the girl. Her whole high-bred nature felt loathing contempt for the man who had forced his attentions on one to whom they were distasteful. There was something inconceivable to the girl's mind in Fernandez's attack. And faugh! How she shrank from physical contact! But after all Constance could not but feel a trifle thankful toward him in spite of all.

After remembering her discovery of the staircase and of the one great door which barred her way to freedom, the girl began to plan a possible means of escape. She felt that the passage of each day rendered her position more precarious. She realized that Fernandez was almost mad with his passion for her. His unchecked thievery of kisses had shown to the girl that the Latin temperament was dangerously volcanic, and that, though the man had been kind to her as she lay unconscious, it was a kindness which she could in nowise count on in the future. Her mind and body shrank back appalled. True, the worst of fates she might have guarded against by self-destruction, for between the mattresses of her bed she had placed a dinner knife filched from the tableware sent to her room, but she was young—splendidly young and vital—and life ran vividly through her veins. For the first two or three days of her imprisonment she had wished to die. Her father and mother murdered, she had felt that life held nothing for her. But the habit of living is too powerful to be broken in the youthful, even by the darkest sorrow. Age, now and then, yearns to drink of the waters of oblivion, but youth never, except in the first wild shrinking from some mortal agony.

"How may I meet this situation? This was the thought that had beaten wildly about in the girl's mind since she was first brought into the grim and somber old pile known as the Castle La Garcia. Now the thought pressed more heavily upon her than ever before. She realized, with a sickening sensation, almost of hopelessness, that Pedro might never return. Had not Fernandez told her that her father's servant had been watched? Then, moreover, Pedro might never have left the capital. Maybe he was dead, and perhaps her written appeal for help rested in the grave with him, or had come into the hands of her captor.

Constance more than once had seen her father pit his brain against the brains of others and win. She wondered whether she might not win freedom for herself, and without aid from the outside. Then the girl wondered if, after all, her father and mother had been murdered. Perhaps they had only been wounded and beaten. Perhaps they were even now held imprisoned as she was held. This last thought, and the one that she might be able to win her way through the great basement door, sent a ray of light into the darkness of the young girl's mind.

"If I could only get that door open, I am sure that I would be free, for I believe that it leads straight out into the street. Once through it, I could escape to one of the friendly foreign embassies." thought the girl? "How may I get through that door? How may I open it?" Over and over again, Constance asked herself these questions. Over and over again she found no answer to them. Her hands were so weak! And she had no instruments save the table knife. With this she could accomplish nothing, unless on this might depend her personal safety for several weeks. But even here there was a risk, a terrible risk, the dreadful risk of being apprehended while at her work. Constance thought that perhaps her captors did know of the spiral staircase.

Memory came to her of how Morgan, the Confederate cavalry leader, had tunneled his way to freedom, using only such a knife as was in her possession. But Morgan had been a strong, desperate man. Now and then he had got assistance, while she—she was only a girl, a very young girl, and quite alone, Almost hope died in her when she thought of these things. But the blood of a fighting father and a brave mother was in her, so she continued to struggle with the pressing problem.

Along with Constance Clemmins' other inheritances, some one had handed down to her a keen sense of humor. Every now and then, despite the fearful seriousness of her position, the thought would come to her:

"What a ridiculous position! What an impossible position! The idea! A girl of the twentieth century caught and imprisoned by a bold, bad man with a curling mustache. It's too astounding—I don't believe it myself. Wake me up, Mabel, I'm dreaming!"

And the girl would laugh. But these intervals of merriment were short. However funny and opera bouffe her situation might now and then seem, Constance knew that in reality she was in a dreadful predicament. Though she was a daughter of the twentieth century, she was in a land which harked back almost to the fifteenth century. Here in the revolution-ridden nation, oppression stalked abroad and ground down under its cruel heel the country's real blood and brain. She was imprisoned in a land still shadowed by the darkest of all clouds—the cloud of ignorance.

Constance was sufficiently well informed and enough of a thinker to understand this. She had not lived in Mexico five years for nothing. However, she was not so much an altruist as to wish to perish in a struggle which had for its purpose the dispelling of the darkness. After a very old human fashion, the girl craved safety and comfort.

Throughout the morning Constance racked her brain for some solution of the problem of the great basement door at the bottom of the spiral staircase. Then, when the probability of untying the vexing knot seem furthest away, presto! a light came to her, and she almost cried aloud for joy. Probably she would have cried out had not Juan at that moment entered with her lunch.

CHAPTER XIII.

PEDRO got one swift glance of that long, terrible body hurling at him through the air. On one knee and bending slightly to one side, he held the point of his machete to meet the impact. The great beast struck him with a force that sent him tumbling head-over-heels backward. For one blind instant Pedro felt that in another moment the brute would be rending him limb from limb. He lay stunned for a moment, and then got dizzily to his feet. Two yards away a splendid specimen of the Mexican mountain lion lay. Through the breast of the beast the machete had been driven and protruded from behind the shoulders. A sob of thanksgiving rose in the Mexican's throat as he gazed down upon the body of the animal, and then at the unconscious form of his friend. The moonlight filtering through the foliage above them made splotches of light on the big beast's body and on the white face of the reporter. Despite the fact that he still trembled from excitement, the guide tore away the blood-soaked bandage from his companion's shoulder and washed the bleeding wound. Whipping off his own shirt, he tore away the arms of the garment and rebandaged the wound in such a manner as to check the flow of blood. He then took the flask of brandy from the reporter's pocket and poured some of it between the American's lips. Pedro wanted a drink himself, but he replaced the bottle in the pocket from which it had been taken without tasting the liquor, because he felt that the supply must be hoarded.

Knowing that it would be worse than useless for them to attempt to go on through the swamps, now that they were without a mount, the guide prepared to await the coming of morning. He made his friend as comfortable as possible, and prepared to doze and watch for danger. The effect of the liquor soon brought the American back to consciousness. He opened his eyes, and Pedro spoke to him.

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"Senor," he said, "we will have to wait until dawn."

Wilson sat up while his companion pointed to the dead body of the lion and told of the runaway horse. For all of his eager wish to push forward, the young American was in no mood to find fault with Pedro's decision. The two men chatted together for a few minutes, and then, in spite of the fact that they had slept most of the day before in the abandoned hut,, they dozed and felt the need of more sleep.

The sun was well up the next morning when the pair awakened. The new day brought them rare good luck. They had walked hardly a hundred yards from their camping place when they came upon the runaway horse feeding among tall, lush swamp grasses. Exercising care not to excite the animal, they caught it, remounted, and began again their journey into the west. Since the heavy downpour of the night before the floods had diminished, and the travelers on a strange quest found that they could now proceed with a fair degree of expeditiousness. They also learned that Pedro's belief that he could find a way around the deadly quicksands was correct. The Mexican's knowledge of the swamps stood him and the reporter in good stead. Several times the guide, after stopping the horse and gazing intently ahead for a moment, said, "Ah, eet ees th' queecksan'." After which he would swerve his mount's head and find a new way around. The reporter shuddered on each of these occasions. The thought of what might have happened to him and Pedro had they both ridden off into the quicksand the previous night was a horrible one.

Pedro had indeed been a true and valued friend since they began this remarkable journey. But for Pedro, thought the reporter, he might have been tortured and put to death by Maas' men; but for Pedro he might have gone hungry the day before in the adobe hut, even had he been so fortunate as to find a shelter; and but for Pedro he would certainly have come to his death in these awesome swamps. As they rode along, the young American pondered these things. And then he came to think of the bravery of the guide when he slew the mountain lion. He wondered how a mountain lion came to be skulking in the lowlands, and asked Pedro.

"They often come down out of their fastnesses in search of quarry," the guide replied, and added: "Like their human brothers, beasts are driven to do many things because of hunger. Senor, eet ees really hunger which causes this war in Mexico, hunger and cruelty. Hunger makes men cruel, cruelty makes men go to war. They become mad with blood lust when they do not have enough to eat."

The reporter was quite prepared to believe anything that his guide said along this line right then. Hunger had begun to bite him with insistent teeth. Pedro was also hungry, for neither of them had tasted food since the day before. For this reason the guide's words fell on fertile soil. In addition to having gone without food for many hours, the reporter had lost much blood, and he felt weak and dizzy at times, and experienced difficulty in keeping his seat on the bare back of the horse. This did not escape the watchful eye of the guide. Two or three times he suggested that they had better stop until the American felt stronger.

"No, no, Pedro!" the reporter answered each time. "The thing for us to do is to keep moving. We must find food; that is imperative, and food cannot be found in these swamps. If we stopped it would only serve to make me weaker in the end. By going on we are making time as well as drawing closer to a full stomach."

So the pair rode on. As they advanced the heat grew intense. As the reporter had foreseen, heat beat down on them from above and arose to them from the miasmic earth below. The air was stirless, suffocating.

For miles the pair rode thus, with Wilson blindly clinging to the man in front of him and wondering whether he could keep his seat until they got out of these horrible swamps. About noon they crossed a sluggish little river along the edges of which an unhealthy green scum had spread itself. The heat seemed to be beating from tremendous furnaces above and below him. With blurred eyes he looked out upon the sluggish river. Four or five hundred feet above the spot at which they forded the stream, Wilson caught a glimpse of the long, horrible heads of several crocodiles lifted out of the scummy water. The whole world seemed clothed in a haze of unreality to the wounded and hungry man. Somehow he got the impression that he was at a theatrical performance, and that in a moment the situation would be relieved by the appearance on the stage of a joyful chorus. Then, in another moment, he would believe himself caught in the web of a dreadful dream from which he would soon awaken to scornful laughter at his fears. Then he would remember that this was no theatrical performance, no dreadful dream, but stark reality which must be faced and fought as a strong man should face and fight it, with every ounce of physical and moral strength there was in him.

Feeling that he must fight off delirium, Wilson in a dizzy sort of fashion decided that he must cease to look out upon the world that was bobbing and dancing before his fevered vision. After the dim fashion of men who are on the edge of delirium, he came to the conclusion that his only hope lay in keeping close watch on the neck of the man who rode in front of him.

"If only that pain wouldn't keep pounding my shoulder," thought the reporter. His head began aching dully. This pain became more obtrusive until, at last, the pain in his head and the pain in his shoulder seemed to merge into one whipping agony. This was probably not far from truth, for the network of sensitive nerves in the shoulders lies close to the nerve center at the base of the brain.

Finally everything seemed to Wilson to run off into a sort of yellowish haze. He retained only one thought, and that was that he must watch closely the blur that was Pedro in front of him. He clung tightly to the guide. He felt that unless he did these things all was lost. Sense of time was obliterated in the reporter's mind.

The young American remembered dimly that at last Pedro brought his horse to a halt, and that there were voices about him. Then, for the second time within twelve hours, the reporter fainted.

The riders had passed out of the swamps an hour before. Once out of the lowlands, the guide had been puzzled at first as to his whereabouts, but being unusually familiar with the country through which they were traveling, he had soon decided that their position was about fifteen miles south of Virreyes, a small town not quite halfway between the coast and Mexico City. Pedro knew that the snow-capped mountain which loomed up at him out of the South could be no other than Orizaba. The guide knew that he must seek some place of shelter. He felt that the man behind him was on the verge of collapse, and he knew also that there was much danger now of capture by roving bands of Colorados. All available Federal troops which had not been sent by rail to reinforce Maas for the seemingly imminent struggle with the Americans at Vera Cruz, the guide knew were held close for purposes of defense about the capital. He knew that it was probable that the outlaws would take advantage of this situation and ravage the stretches of country between.

Pedro halted his horse for several minutes and pondered. He concluded that he would come more quickly to a house or a settlement by riding northward by a rarely used road which he glimpsed to the right of him. Taking the chances of causing the loss of more blood to his companion, the guide turned his horse's head northward, and urged the animal to a gallop. The Mexican threw one arm back and supported the reporter as best he could. They had ridden about a half-mile when they came in sight of a house much like the one in which they had passed the previous day. But unlike the other house, this one was inhabited, for smoke curled upward from a lonely chimney. It was one of those smaller ranch houses which one finds throughout the habitable sections of the Southern republic.

Pedro rode up in front of the yard and called a view hallo, or as near to it as a Mexican can call. In answer to the summons a tall, white-haired peon, coolly clad and with his feet in sandals, emerged from the door. The two Mexicans greeted each other. Pedro began talking rapidly to the old man. The latter ran out and helped Wilson to the ground just as he lost consciousness. Together the two men bore the reporter in-

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doors, where after the host called to a straight, tall girl, who later proved to be his daughter, to feed and water the horse of the travelers. The reporter was laid on a bed in a little room scrupulously clean. Restoratives were applied to him, and as he regained consciousness, he was given a glass of goat's milk.

Meanwhile Pedro ate heartily of cheese, tortillas, and goat's butter. While he ate, the members of Juan Vallejo's family gathered about him. Wilson lay recuperating in the next room.

The Vallejo family consisted of old Juan, his wife, and their two daughters, all of whom spoke bitterly against the war.

"For senor," said the old Mexican, "this war has taken nearly everything worth while from us. Our two sons are dead, and almost weekly, bands of rebels, Federals or Colorados, swoop down upon us. Only three days ago the Colorados were here. They took my last two horses and nearly all of my supplies. It would have been death to refuse. One of my sons lost his life out there at the front gate two months ago, because he protested against the rebels when they robbed us of a herd of goats. They ran him through with a machete; we buried him in the front yard."

The old man sorrowfully waved a hand toward the front. His wife, an aged crone, and his two daughters, both of them beautiful in the Mexican fashion, began weeping and rocking themselves from side to side

CHAPTER XIV.

SENOR," said the old man, who had been born a peon on one of the great sugar plantations, but who had brought himself to independence by great labor, "what difference does it make which side robs you? You are made as poor by one as by the other; they come and they take and they take, leaving behind as little as they can. Finally when they have taken all, one joins and rides away with them in sheer self-protection. It is very sad, senor."

For a half hour the old man poured his sorrows into his visitor's ears. While Juan talked, the reporter, having recovered his strength somewhat, came into the room. He listened to what the old man was saying, but most of it he could not understand. He knew that Pedro would tell him all that there was worth repeating, so he was undisturbed. The reporter, though he felt his strength returning, thought it best to preserve silence and keep his nationality secret His wound and his weakened condition were sufficient excuses for this.

Midafternoon came. Following the universal custom which demand an afternoon siesta, whether there be war or peace in the land, members of the Vallejo household and their two guests sought slumber. It was exceedingly hot, and a great silence seemed to rest on the world. Every one in the ranch house was in a half-doze or sleep except the American. He could not sleep, for his mind was with the tasks which lay before him.

Suddenly outside the house he heard a sharp cry: "Senor, senor!" the voice said. Instantly every one in the house was awake. Old Vallejo hurried out to the front door.

"Greetings!" he called in his native language. "Come in," he added. A moment later the old man turned back into the house accompanied by an exceedingly worn and bedraggled youth, whose haggard face and bloodshot eyes proclaimed that he had recently undergone hardships.

It was that same Mexican lad Maximo Ruiz, other time resident of the "Way of the Hungry Heart;" the very same who, fired with the great passion of patriotism—or was it self-preservation?—who had braved parental displeasure to seek military service and sufficient physical sustenance in the ranks of the Mexican forces guarding egress from Vera Cruz.

"Give me food, senor," gasped the boy. Somewhere along the way he had lost his machete and perhaps that rusty old pistol stolen from among his bibulous father's treasures.

Pedro and the reporter came out into the big central room. Maximo Ruiz shrank in fright before them, nor could the boy be blamed.

In Mexico, at this moment, no one knows to which side his nearest neighbor and dearest friend belongs. An undercurrent of fear is to be found everywhere. However, the lad was reassured, and a few moments later was eating ravenously of the fare set before him by one of the daughters of the house.

"Dios! I almost had my hands upon food back there in the railway station," exclaimed the boy, his mouth full of cheese. "Then the Colorados came, and I had to leave it all behind. Not even time to grab up a handful, and I had not eaten since the night before." Maximo spoke rapidly in the Mexican patois. "No one along the way would feed me. Truly it is terrible—this war!

"The Colorados came up along the railroad track, the station master had put food before me; I knew that with those Colorados in sight it was best for me to run, so I ran and ran. I ran harder than ever I ran before, despite the fact that my belly was empty and my knees weak. Fear gives speed. The Colorados were riding toward the coast. I did not look back to learn if they stopped at the station. It was no concern of mine, but I hated to leave that food behind. Dios! but this is better food, though I am hungrier even than I was then. Perhaps the difference lies there."

The boy paused, for he wished to get as much cheese, goat's milk and tortillas inside himself as he could. He did not know when the gods would vouchsafe him another meal.

After eating what would have seemed an incredible amount of food to Wilson, two days before, the young Mexican leaned back in his chair and grew garrulous. Generally speaking, garrulity is one of the worst of traits. Talking too much gets more people into trouble than anything else, but this was one of those rare times when garrulity proved a blessing.

"That station keeper told me," said Maximo, "that the President is going to send more soldiers to the army outside Vera Cruz. He is getting all of the trains into the city so that he can load soldiers on them and send them back. At dawn tomorrow five empty trains will pass, going into the capital. Tomorrow night they start on the return."

Pedro's quick mind caught at the significance of the information. Warily he let the boy talk, but every now and then the guide would bring the lad back to the subject of the empty trains that would pass from Vera Cruz to Mexico City the next day at dawn. Little by little Pedro learned all that the boy knew. This was much. The five empty trains were scheduled to pass the station of La Cruz between three and four o'clock the next morning, and they would probably be manned only by the train crews, reaching the capital sometime in the afternoon.

Pedro learned that the station of La Cruz lay about sixteen miles to the northward, and that it was only four miles west of Virreyes. He was familiar with the place, and knew that it consisted only of the station house and a few adobe houses very like the home of Vallejo.

"Did you learn whether the United States has begun war against our country?" asked Pedro.

"The station keeper told me that America had not yet begun war," answered the lad, and continued. "He said that the President of that country was seeking, with the aid of others, to force General Huerta to resign, and that our President had begun to fear for his life. Before I left the capital there was much talk against our ruler."

The boy halted, but went on a moment later: "I do not know whether I wish to be a soldier or not. I would like to know which side is going to be in power before I enlist." This was not the voice of patriotism; it was the tongue of self-preservation. Who can blame Maximo?

In Pedro's mind a plan was being borne. He burned to be able to speak alone with his American companion. However, the guide sat for a few minutes more while the boy talked. Then he got up and went into the bedroom, and was closely followed by the reporter who, from the expression on the guide's face, knew that he had received valuable information.

CHAPTER XV.

SENOR WILSON," said the guide speaking rapidly, "this is a great chance," and he told Wilson the story of the five empty trains.

"We must catch one of those trains, and accomplish in a few hours that which it would otherwise take us two or three or maybe four days," answered the reporter.

Pedro continued, "But senor, do not forget that maybe the train may not come. The boy told of a band of Colorados; they may wreck the tracks, though I do not think that they will do so. It is generally the Federals or the rebels who wreck the railroads. Ah, senor," went on the guide, "you may think it strange that I Mexican born, take no sides in this contest. Well, senor, listen. The Senor Clemmins was kind to me. All Mexicans are at one another's throats—that is why Pedro takes no sides."

At that moment the reporter was careless of Pedro's motives. Chiefly he was concerned with getting to Mexico City as quickly as possible.

"Pedro," he said, "we will leave this house tonight and make our way to La Cruz station. If those trains go through we must catch one of them. I think that it will be well for us to leave here early tonight and push on to La Cruz as quickly as possible. We then will be well rested by dawn."

To this the guide agreed heartily, and with the decision a kind fate worked in their behalf, as will be presently shown.

A moment later old Juan poked his head through the bedroom door.

"Senors," he said, "the boy Maximo joins not the army. He says that the good food here and my kindness to him persuade him to be my son. I need a son; therefore from this moment the boy Maximo is my son."

Thus patriotism was knocked into a cocked hat by one full meal.

Juan withdrew his white, tousled head Pedro told the American the import of the old man's words. Wilson laughed heartily, but he could not help believing that, had he stood in Maximo's shoes—or on Maximo's feet, for the boy wore no shoes—he would have done as Maximo had done.

From first sight of Maximo, Pedro had felt that the lad's face was familiar to him, and finally now remembered where he had seen him, but Pedro's own recent hardships seemed to have changed his appearance so that the recognition was not mutual.

After supper that night Pedro drew old Juan aside. "Senor," he said, "for your kindness we will leave you the horse. My friend and I wish to reach the capital as quickly as possible; we will endeavor to catch one of those trains of which the boy spoke. Therefore we must go at once. Please keep silent if any one comes asking for us."

Throughout the journey Pedro had not been able to rid his mind of the fear that the tall Mexican who had attacked his friend on the first night of their journey still followed them. Moreover, he feared that the soldiers from whom he had escaped the night before might follow him also, so he added: "It might be well, senor, for you to keep the horse hidden for a few days. Senor, we captured the horse."

Old Juan was profuse in his thanks and in his protestations that he would be very cautious.

Almost immediately after this conversation with the old peon, the two travelers departed from the roof of the little ranch house, after they had been made recipents each of a cape and a basket of food Hardly had the men passed out of earshot when a lone horseman drew rein in front of Juan's house and hailed. The old man went to the door and asked the horseman to alight and enter. The man did so Maximo Ruiz sat in a corner of the big livingroom. About him the shadows were so heavy that he was hardly visible

As the stranger entered the room, his host noted that he was lean and tall, and that his thin lips were drawn back from fanglike, discolored teeth. It was the man who had attacked the reporter in the dark. He questioned old Juan closely.

Had Juan seen two men traveling that way?

No

One of them was an American. He wished much to come up with the two men.

"No one has passed this way for three days, senor," said Juan, with inward quaking as he thought of the horse in the stable outside.

The Mexican explained that he had followed the two from Vera Cruz, that they were dangerous men, and that he was in the employ of Lopez Fernandez, secretary to President Huerta, and that only a short time before he had come upon a body of soldiers from whom the two men had not only stolen two horses, but had stampeded other animals belonging to the military detachment. The man explained that he had followed the two by their horses' tracks. He declared that the two might have separated, as he had found the tracks of only one of the animals from a point in the swamps. He also spoke of finding the dead body of a mountain lion.

Throughout, Juan shook his head. The visitor turned to go. As he did so, Maximo Ruiz rose swiftly in his corner. Reaching out quickly he caught a rusty

(Continued on page fourteen.)

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Literal Anguish.

"Woman, you are undone!" hissed her rival in the amateur play '

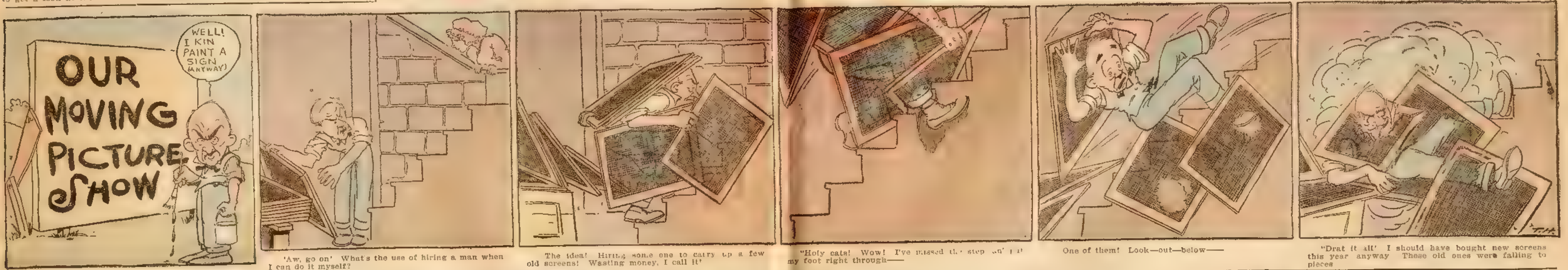
"Oh, where?" cried the heroine, trying to get a look at the back of her waist

Talks of Himself.

"I've never heard him say an unkind word about anybody '

"No, he's too busy talking about himself."

CARRYING UP THE SCREENS


OUR MOVING PICTURE SHOW
WELL! I KIN PAINT A SIGN (ANYWAY)
T.H.

'Aw, go on' What's the use of hiring a man when I can do it myself?

The idea! Hiring some one to carry up a few old screens! Wasting money, I call it'

"Holy cats! Wow! I've missed th' step an' put my foot right through——

One of them! Look—out—below——

"Drat it all' I should have bought new screens this year anyway These old ones were falling to pieces

JUST HIS WAY.

Old Tightwad hates to pay a debt,
He's ready to dispute it,
He'll kick at any bill, and yet
He never wants to foot it.

Fully Equipped.

He—"Are you sure that you are fitted to be a poor man's wife?"

She—"Sure. Why, my love, I know every bargain counter in town.'

Unhappy Boy.

"Why are you sobbing, my little man?"

"My pa's a millionaire philanthropist."

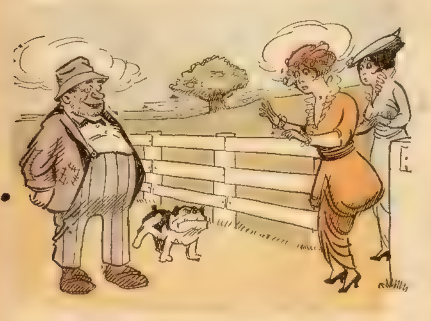
"Well, well, that's nothing to cry about."

"It ain't, ain't it? He's just promised to give me five dollars to spend, provided I raise a similar amount."—Life.

A Strong Term.

The doctor was worried about the condition of his patient. "I think I shall have to call in some other physician for consultation."

That's right go ahead," said the patient. "Get as many accomplices as you can '



The Peach—"Will your dog bite us?"

The Bum—"I shouldn't be surprised, miss. He's got a oncommon sweet tooth!"

One Better.

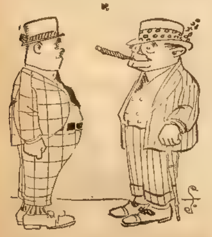
An enterprising young florist, in order to increase his trade, displayed this sign in his window

"We give a packet of flower seeds with every plant."

His competitor across the street promptly sought to meet the competition by placing in his window the following announcement:

"We give the earth with every plant."

* * *



Casey—"If a man hit me on the head wid a baseball bat, could I git damages?"

O'Brien—"Yes; if you had a hat on. Otherwise, not!"

Polite Tommy.

Tommy's father had been giving him lessons in politeness, but hardly dared hope that the seeds of his teaching had taken root

One day, hearing noise coming from the nursery, he investigated and found Tommy pounding his little brother

'I m surprised, Tommy," said his father sternly, "that you should hurt your little brother. Don't you know that it is cowardly to strike one who is smaller than yourself?

"Yes," replied the culprit, meekly, "but when you spanked me yesterday I was too polite to mention it

Pat Contradicts.

Parson (advisedly)—"Two rights never make a wrong, Pat, you must know"

Pat—"Indeed, your reverence, you are wrong!"

Parson—"Now, now, Pat I'm right."

Pat—"But I say you are wrong, your reverence"

Parson—"And how, Pat?"

Pat (triumphantly)—"Your reverence, two rights make a wrong when they're boots!"

Dividing the Cost.

Mr. Summerman—"Is it true that since coming up here you've engaged yourself to Billy, Harry, Ed, and George, as well as to myself?

Miss Sweetly—"What if it is?"

Mr Summerman—"Then I'd like to know if you have any objection to all of us chipping in to buy the engagement ring?"

RECIPE FOR HAPPINESS.

"Lovely, lissome, laughing Liz,
Do you never, never weep?
Don't you know what trouble is?
Do you laugh, dear, in your sleep?

"I have never seen you frown,
Never known you to complain
Or be in a study brown,
Or to sigh that life is vain!

"'I'm a melancholy wight,
Living in a world of moan,
And I don't believe it right
I should bear my woes alone.

"Tell me what your secret is,
That you can so cheerful be.
I need your assistance, Liz—
Won't you share my lot with me?"

Lovely, laughing Liz upspake:
"You would know my source of joy?
Learn it, then, for goodness sake,
And no longer me annoy!

"I am happy all the time
Just because I am not wed
Now put that in silly rhyme
And then beat it, do!" she said.

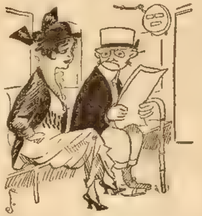
Their Only Fault.

Hardware Salesman—"I assure you, madam, these kitchen knives represent the greatest value ever offered at the price.

Customer—"They certainly look nice and seem very cheap. The only question is, will they cut?"

Salesman—"Ah, madam, if you ask me that, I'm bound to say they will not; but that is their only fault."

* * *



Mrs. Stylo—"I think a man is only as brave as he looks

Mr. Littleton—"I thought the same thing about a dog one time. That's why I limp now."

A Patient in Doubt.

An insurance agent was filling out an application blank.

"Have you ever had appendicitis?" he asked.

'Well," answered the applicant, "I was operated on, but I have never felt quite sure whether it was appendicitis or professional curiosity"

A Musical Education.

"What is your son doing now?"

"Playing the piano in a moving picture show"

"I shouldn't think you would want him doing that."

"I don't, but when a chap has a musical education he's got to do something with it, hasn't he?"

Progress.

"I am glad to see you home, Johnny," said the father to his small son, who had been away at school, but who was now home on his vacation. "How are you getting on at school?"

"Fine," said Johnny "I have learned to say 'Thank you' and 'If you please' in French."

"Good!" said the father. "That's more than you ever learned to say in English."

The Remains.

A negro died without medical attendance, and the coroner went to investigate. "Did Samuel Williams live here?" he asked the weeping woman who answered the door

"Yussah," she replied between sobs.

'May I see the remains?" asked the coroner

"I is de remains," she answered proudly.

The Way It Works.

Customer—"Are these five or six wedding rings all you have in stock? Why, you've got a whole trayful of engagement rings."

Jeweler—"Yes, sir, and it will take that whole trayful of engagement rings to work off those five or six wedding rings."

Fishy.

Mother—"Son you said you'd been to Sunday-school

Johnny (with a faraway look)—"Yes mamma

Mother—"How does it happen that your hands smell of fish?"

Johnny—"I carried home the Sunday school magazine, an' the outside page is all about Jonah and the whale."

Cheek.

Old Richleigh—"So you want to marry my daughter. What are your prospects, may I ask?"

Suitor—"Excellent sir, if I get her I know you'll do the handsome thing by us

If Living.

On one occasion a census clerk, in scanning one of the forms to see that it had been properly filled up, noticed the figures 120 and 119 under the headings "Age of father, if living," and "Age of mother, if living"

But your parents were never so old, were they?" queried the astonished clerk.

"No," was the reply, "but they would ha' bin, if living."

Against It.

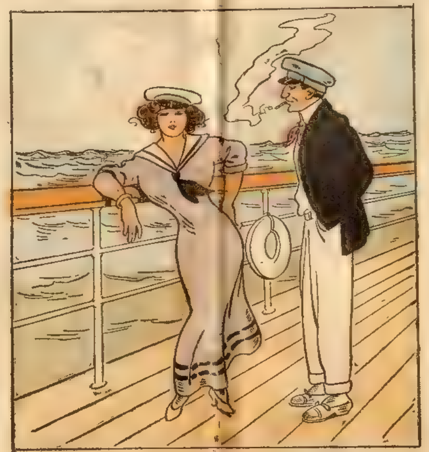
When a woman canvasser asked an old farmer to sign a petition in favor of a woman's movement he eyed the document for a while with suspicion.

"No, I'm ag'in' it sure," was the reply, with the emphasis of a man who had had a domestic infelicity. "A woman who's allus a-movin' is allus a-gettin' in trouble. If you got anything to keep her quiet I'll sign it."

An Angelic Bird.

Customer—"But is he a good bird! I mean, I hope he doesn't use dreadful language."

Dealer—"He's a saint, lady sing 'ymns beautiful. I had some parrots wot used to swear something awful, but, if you'll believe me, this 'ere bird converted the lot."



Mr. Needmore—"If you refuse me my life will be filled with bitterness and gall."

Miss Bullion—"I don't know about the bitterness, but you're there with the gall, all right."

The Way to Do It.

Mrs. Pankhurst, as the Majestic sailed from New York, talked to a reporter about the comparative deceitfulness of men and women

"Women," said the reporter, "are the more deceitful"

"No" said Mrs. Pankhurst, "men are the worst. Look at the way they deceive their wives."

"Do you claim," the reporter asked, "that men should never deceive their wives?"

Mrs. Pankhurst smiled and tossed her head

'Oh, no," she said. "How could the average man ever get a wife if he didn't deceive her?"

Father's Reason.

Young Harold was late in attendance for Sunday school and the minister inquired the cause

'I was going fishing, but father wouldn't let me." announced the lad

"That's the right kind of a father to have" replied the reverend gentleman. "Did he explain the reason why he would not let you go?"

"Yes, sir. He said there wasn't bait enough for two '

The Selfish Passenger.

Conductor (crowded car)—"Plenty o' room inside

Passenger (one of forty hanging to straps —"Plenty of room, eh? Where is it?'

Conductor (wrathfully)—"Alongside o' you, you selfish hunk o' humanity. Want ter keep that strap all to yerself, don't yer?"

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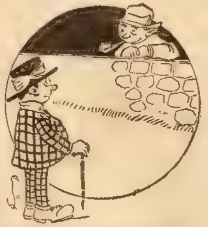


Binks—"Have any luck trout fishing this year?"

Jinks—"Bettcher life: caught a two weeks' influenza and collected $50 health insurance."

Change of Program.

American Girl—"Ma, the Scotch lord has invited me to see the new tragedy with him tonight, and I see by the papers that the star is ill and the drama will not be produced. It's awfully provoking."

Ma—"That doesn't matter, dear; you have seen that tragedy once, and no doubt some other play will be presented. Go with him, of course."

American Girl (after the performance) —"You sat through that comedy without a smile, and it was awfully funny, too; I nearly died laughing"

Scotch Lord—"Why dinna ye tell me it was a comedy? I bought stalls for a tragedy."

From Observation.

Father—"What's the young man's business who I saw hugging you in the parlor last night?"

Daughter (confused)—"Why, er—er—he's a book agent, sir'

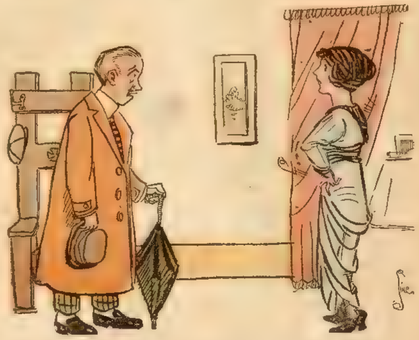
Father—"Oh! I thought he was a press agent."

Real Independence.

Wiseman—"Well, China has started off fairly well in the independence business."

Cynicus—'But it had to borrow money right off the bat."

Wiseman—"True. But it doesn't have to go abroad for firecrackers."



Mister—"You don't throw kisses after me now, like you used to, dear!"

Missus—"Don't be silly, Herbert Did you ever know a fisherman to throw bait to a fish he'd caught?'

Famous Rhode Island.

It was a geography lesson, and the teacher had been asking what some of the different States were noted for Looking at one of the little girls, she asked.

"Tell me, Florence, what Rhode Island is celebrated for?"

For a moment the child was silent, then an inspiration apparently came to her

"Rhode Island," replied the little girl, "is celebrated for being the only one of the United States that is the smallest."

Priestly Kindness.

A gentleman took pity upon an Irish laborer who was toiling in an excavation on a hot summer day, and, producing a bottle and a glass, refreshed Pat with a glass of whisky. Pat was exuberant in his expressions of thanks

"Arrah, sir," he said, 'it's good; it s to me just like mother's milk to an infant'"

"But what would the priest say," asked the gentleman, "if he knew that I was giving you this drink?"

"Och, sor," said Pat, "what would he say but just this—'Give him another!'"

Reason Dethroned.

Caller—"Is your husband still in the asylum, Mrs. Lakeside?"

Mrs. Lakeside (of Chicago)—"Yes, and the poor dear is getting crazier every week. In his last letter he says he wants to pay his debts."

Should Have Come Sooner.

"How long has this restaurant been open?" asked the would-be diner

"Two years," said the proprietor.

"I am sorry I did not know it," said the guest. "I should be better off if I had come here then"

Yes" smiled the proprietor, very much pleased "How is that?"

'I should probably have been served by this time if I had," said the guest, and the entente cordiale vanished.

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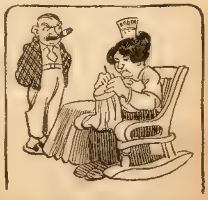

Wife—"Silence is golden, they say."

Husband—"Gee, yes. Think how rich I would have been if I hadn't asked you to marry me."

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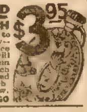

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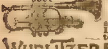

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(Continued from page eleven.)

old machete from the wall. The boy made a quick leap and drove the weapon through the man's body. The visitor caught out at the doorposts and sank slowly between them. By the time he reached the floor he was dead.

Old Juan, alarmed and angered, whirled upon his newly adopted son and started to speak. The women of the house who had rushed into the room a moment before, cried shrilly in alarm.

"It is Arturo Velegas; he wronged my sister!" exclaimed Maximo, his voice vibrant with suppressed passion. "He was a bad man! First he was a rebel, then he became a Colorado; of late he has been a Federal, but he was a Colorado and a robber at heart all the time."

Juan and the boy dragged the body out into the night. Later, when dense darkness had fallen about the land, they would bury the man. Juan did not upbraid the lad. On the contrary, he said:

"Maximo you are a good son. Through your efforts I have become the owner of a second horse—all in one day—Dios!"

Maximo stabled the other animal.

Unmolested, Pedro and the reporter made their way to La Cruz. They chose a wooded spot close by the little village, wrapped themselves in their new capes, and fell asleep. Pedro explained that should any of the trains slow for the station, it would be a comparatively easy matter for them to get aboard, as the doors of empty box cars nearly always stood open in Mexico.

Long before dawn Pedro awakened his companion. Wilson and the guide ate a quick breakfast from the basket that Juan had given them. They had about finished the meal when they heard in the distance the rumbling approach of a train. Along the railway tracks just east of the station, there was a heavy thicket of undergrowth. The two men ran for it. They reached the thicket unseen by any of the villagers, though there were few of them about this early. Pedro bore the basket of food upon his arm.

Five minutes later the train clattered into sight, drew opposite them, and almost came to a halt. The two men climbed into a box car, unobserved. After a little while the train increased its speed. The car in which the two men found themselves was empty, except for a pile of loose hay which lay in one corner. They stretched themselves out on the hay, and because they had not yet recovered from their exhausting experiences, were soon asleep, lulled by the steady clack of wheels under them.

How long the two slept neither of them knew. They were awakened when the train came to a sudden jarring halt, which sent them sprawling from their places in the hay out into the middle of the car. Pedro grabbed up the basket of provisions, and the two men burrowed into the hay. They heard the door of the car slide back, and a moment later the footsteps of several men as they walked about in the car.

Pedro and the reporter lay quite still. About them the voices of several men in conversation were heard. Two of the men began prodding the hay pile with their machetes.

The continuation of this thrilling story will be found in the Ledger issue of next week. If you are not a regular subscriber to the Ledger we would like to have your name on our list. The Ledger is only $1.00 per year and we have stories awaiting publication that you cannot afford to miss.

⁂

A SECRET.

"I've been out of town for a few days," remarked Alice to her friend Nell. "Bess and Claribell Spencer entertained all our old school club at their summer place, Rose Lodge, before they closed it. There were ten of us all told, and we had quite an exciting time. I wish I dared tell you about it."

"Why shouldn't you tell me?"

"Well, I know I really should not, but if you'll promise eternal secrecy, I believe I will tell you, because you're a friend of Virginia's and anything that concerns her will be of special interest to you.

"You see, the first night we were at Rose Lodge we sat on the floor before the blazing fire and played 'truth.' The engaged girls all confessed, and when it came Virginia's turn she laughed and said she wasn't engaged yet! And that was all she would say.

"You know how telegrams are usually delivered by telephone in the country. Well, one morning when I was straightening the diningroom a message came over the 'phone for Virginia. She was out walking, so I took it for her. After the operator had given it to me he insisted upon my shouting it back to him for verification. Bess, Helen, Anita, and Margaret, who were the dinner committee that day, were in the kitchen and heard every word. Well, their curiosity was equal to mine."

"What was the telegram?" demanded Nell.

"It was: 'I earnestly beg you to return unopened special delivery letter mailed you yesterday. Deeply regret I cannot explain.' It was signed 'John Hartridge.'

"Before Virginia came in from her walk the letter itself had been brought by a boy from the village, and I handed Virginia the dispatch that I had written down and the letter at the same time.

"'What will you do?' we all inquired of her.

"'Just what he asks, of course,' was Virginia's reply.

"'But, Virginia, aren't you almost expiring to know what's in that letter?' asked Joyce.

"'Of course I am,' she admitted, 'but I don't think it would be right for me to open it after getting John's message. Do you, girls?'

"'No-o,' we all agreed, reluctantly. 'But,' added Joyce, 'if that telegram had been delayed an hour you would have read the letter.'

"'Yes, but the telegram wasn't delayed.'

"'Anyway, persisted Joyce, I don't think any man has a right to ask a girl not to read a letter he has sent her. The letter is yours now, Virginia, not his. I'm almost sure that point has been proved by law. If I were you, I'd have no hesitation about opening it.'

"'Well, I don't believe I ought to,' said Virginia, in as firm a tone as she could muster.

"She left the letter lying on the dining table, where it reposed all through dinner. When Joyce, who was head dishwasher that day, gathered the dishes on a tray to carry them to the kitchen, she took the letter also. I think I was the only one who saw her pick it up. My first impulse was to ask what she was going to do with it, but something held me back—a sort of sympathy, perhaps, for the nefarious plan, whatever it was, that I thought had popped into her head.

"'None of you girls need help with the dishes,' she said, with unwonted saintliness. 'I feel that I haven't been doing my share of the work.' As that was the general opinion, no one insisted upon following her into the kitchen.

"When she joined us an hour later she looked dangerously innocent. 'Just see what has happened,' she exclaimed. 'I left the mysterious letter on the plate warmer above the teakettle, and the steam must have loosened the seal, for the envelope is open.'

"'You little imp!' cried Virginia.

"She couldn't control her curiosity any longer, which would have been too much to ask of any human girl. She took the letter and read it, and she didn't even try to conceal from us that it contained an ardent proposal of marriage. I suppose we shall never know what caused John's sudden change of heart."

"Did she send it back?" asked Nell, breathlessly."

"Joyce put it in the envelope again, carefully resealed it, and it was returned to Mr. Hartridge without comment. Poor Virginia, who was really guiltless, would be painfully mortified if he ever learned that it was opened. So, remember your promise, dear, and don't tell a soul."

"No, indeed, I'll never breathe it," Nell assured her impressively. "Did all the nine girls promise secrecy?"

⁂

Glad He Came.

Judge Gary, chairman of the United States Steel Corporation told one the other night which leaves no doubt as to the welcome the minister receives in certain quarters when making a pastoral call.

Some time ago, the Judge said, the minister was expected to visit the home of a good brother, but it was not absolutely certain that he would come. Finally, however, the dominie appeared, and little Willie, who had been watching at the gate, sounded the tidings with glad acclaim.

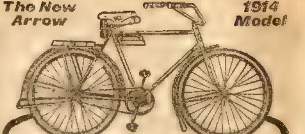
"Whoopee!" joyously cried the youngster, wildly tossing up his hat. "Hip, hip, hurrah! Here he comes, mamma! Here he comes!"

"You seem very glad to seem me, Willie," smiled the preacher, patting the boy on the head and shaking hands with the family.

"You just bet I am!" enthusiastically replied Willie. "I have been afraid all the morning you wouldn't show up!"

"That's awfully nice of you, Willie," said the parson, "Why were you afraid I wouldn't come?"

"Because," was the startling rejoinder of the youngster, "if you hadn't come we wouldn't have had chicken for dinner."



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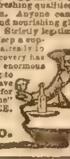

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References: Third National Bank, Sedalia, Mo. Send this notice to some eczema sufferer.

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Borrowing a Book.

"What is that interesting looking book there on your dresser?" asked Marjory, as she watched her friend Dorothy do her hair in the latest fashion

"That is the new novel, 'Untold.' You have heard of it, haven't you?"

"Have I heard of it? Well, I should say so. I have been dying to read it and I'm going to take it home with me now."

"No, you are not," declared Dorothy. "I have three more chapters to read and my family haven't even seen the book."

"I don't care; I am going to take it, anyway. Bob has told so much about it and he is coming over to-morrow evening. I must be able to discuss it with him intelligently. Let me see, to-day is Monday. I'll bring it back on Thursday.'

"But why don't you buy a copy if you are so anxious to read it?'

"What! Spend my money for a popular novel when I can borrow it from my dearest friend? Why, that would be extravagant."

"But I have explained to you that your dearest friend has not yet finished the book and her family hasn't even seen it. Isn't the owner entitled to the first perusal?"

"Don't argue the subject, dear," ordered Marjory, sweetly. "You know you won't refuse me, especially now that I have told you Bob is coming to-morrow evening."

"I suppose I'll have to lend it to you," sighed Dorothy. "You always get your own way. Please understand, Marjory, that I insist upon having 'Untold' back by Thursday at the latest. You know you have a habit of forgetting to return books. You have a good-sized library at your house now. And kindly remember that you are not to lend this book to your Aunt Sophie or your Aunt Martha or your Uncle Nathaniel or any of your relatives, no matter how hard they beg."

"I promise," laughed Marjory, kissing her friend. Then she hurried away with the book under her arm.

The following Thursday afternoon Marjory asked her mother: "Have you seen a brown book called 'Untold' anywhere? It was on my desk this morning when I went to my French lesson, and it isn't there now."

"Yes, dear," replied Mrs. Morton. "Your Aunt Martha was here after you left and she borrowed it. She said she has been trying to get it from the library for the longest time. I really couldn't refuse her."

"Well, I like her style!" exclaimed Marjory. "I'll have to go right over there and get it. I don't see why people have to borrow books anyway."

Entering her aunt's house, Marjory said: "I came for 'Untold.' It doesn't belong to me and I promised to return it to the owner to-day. Mother shouldn't have let you take it."

"I'm dreadfully sorry," replied her aunt, "but the book isn't here. On the way home from your house I met Lizzie Gibbons. She told me her brother was confined to the house with a sprained foot and hadn't a thing to read. As I didn't know you had grown so particular all of a sudden, I lent 'Untold' to her. She will return it inside of a week, I'm sure.

"Dorothy will be furious!" declared Marjory. "I wish people wouldn't be so generous with other people's books, even if they are my aunts. I'll have to go straight over there and get it."

Upon reaching the Gibbons home and demanding the book from Miss Lizzie, Marjory was told: "I'm really ashamed, dear, but I've lost it. After I left your aunt I went down town and when I got home I discovered that I had dropped the book. You will find it in the lost and found department of the car barns, or else in one of the three stores I visited. I'll give you their names. I am sorry I am unable to look for the book, but I can't leave my sick brother."

After tramping unsuccessfully from place to place, according to the list provided for her, Marjory returned home.

"Dorothy telephoned while you were out," said her mother. "She asked me to tell you that a young man had brought 'Untold' to her. He found it in a street car and discovered her name and address on the fly leaf. Being a friend of hers, he returned it personally. She hadn't seen him for a year. She said he is coming again soon and he is so nice that she is delighted to renew the acquaintance. She said that henceforth you can borrow and lose all her books."

"No, mother," sighed Marjory. "I'm glad Dorothy has found an old friend, but after this I'll take wise Mr. Shakespeare's advice, and neither a borrower nor a lender be."

* * *

High-Priced Art.

Friend—"See here, George! What does this bill of twenty dollars mean?"

Amateur Photographer—"You told me that if I'd take half a dozen pictures of your house, you'd gladly stand the expense. That's the expense."

* * *

Definite Answer Wanted.

A witness in a particular case had been examined by the lawyer for the plaintiff and was turned over to the lawyer for the defense for cross-examination.

"Now, then, Mr. Smith," began the legal one, "what did I understand you to say that your occupation is?"

"I am a piano finisher," he answered

"Yes, I see," persisted the lawyer, "but you must be more definite. Do you polish them or do you move them?"

Pawnbrokers Have Sense.

"Say, Tom, lend me a fiver, will you?"

"Oh, go soak your head!"

"I'd be deuced glad to, but they won't give me anything on it."

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Rupture Now Supported and Actually Cured Without Use of Old-Fashioned, Ill-Fitting Steel Spring or Elastic Harness.

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Now it is possible with the aid of a simple but ingenious device, the Schuiling Rupture Lock, to hold the rupture perfectly at all times, under any and all conditions, and to be perfectly and absolutely comfortable while wearing it.

The Schuiling Rupture Lock

is an entirely new idea, different in construction from any other device obtainable for this purpose. It is surprisingly simple, no springs to gouge into the flesh, no elastic bands to rot and smell, no leg straps to make you feel harnessed up like a truck horse, no improperly constructed pads to press directly into and enlarge the ruptured opening. The Schuiling Rupture Lock is scientific and so constructed that it is impossible for it to gouge, bind, slip or get out of place. It is the most comfortable device ever invented for the support and cure of Rupture.

Experience in many of the most severe and aggravated cases that could be found has proved that the **Schuiling Rupture Lock** not only holds the rupture with soothing firmness and perfect comfort, but does it in a way that permits rapid healing and complete and lasting cure. Hundreds who have used it say it is a blessing long looked and yearned for by the rupture afflicted.

READ THESE WORDS

The following extracts from a few of hundreds of similar letters that have been received by The Schuiling Rupture Institute from former sufferers in all parts of the country.

CURED IN 4 MONTHS

"I was fitted with the Schuiling Rupture Lock four months ago and now find that the rupture openings are entirely healed up. I am 81 years old and never expected a cure at my age."

Columbus, Ind. *JOHN SCHINNERER*

WAS RUPTURED FOR YEARS—CURED

"I had been ruptured for years—had worn all kinds of trusses and appliances, but all to no avail until your lock was tried. It held my rupture as nothing before had done. Wore it for eight months and was completely cured."

Cor. Prescott and So. Division Sts.,
Grand Rapids, Mich. *EDWARD E. DICKERSON*

SUFFERED 20 YEARS—NOW WELL

"For twenty years I suffered with the worst kind of double hernia. I tried half a dozen kinds of trusses without success. Was told to try Schuiling Rupture Lock. It cured my ruptures in nine months."

Grand Rapids, Mich. *WALTER WAY*

ONLY ONE THAT GAVE RELIEF

"Of the numerous different trusses that I have bought since my rupture first showed itself ten years ago, your Rupture Lock was the only one that gave me the right support and at the same time comfortable to wear. Will answer all who are looking for comfort and a cure."

Street, Maryland *WM. C. DIEHL*

ANOTHER REMARKABLE CASE

"Your Rupture Lock cured me entirely. The rupture opening was so large I could put two fingers into it—now I can't even find it."

R. F. D., Blue Ridge, N. Y. *BONIE CROSS*

ENTIRELY CURED

"I have taken off my Rupture Lock three months ago entirely cured of a stubborn rupture. I am 41 years old, was ruptured ten years ago and could stick two fingers into the opening."

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FREE TRIAL IS OFFERED TO EVERY SUFFERER

Now Is the Time—Here Is Your Chance to Discard Your Truss Forever and CURE Your Rupture.

Without risking a penny or taking any chances you can obtain the wonderful **Schuiling Rupture Lock**, perfectly fitted to the individual requirements of your case, enjoy its luxurious comfort and its inestimable benefit for 30 days. You can prove to yourself by an actual test in your own case that there is at least one device within your reach that will hold your rupture perfectly while you go about your duties, while you walk, run, strain, bend, twist or move about in any way you like and that never slips. The **Schuiling Rupture Lock Can't** slip, **Can't** bind, **Can't** pinch. You will feel like shouting with joy before you've worn it one day.

Read the statements in the center of this article from persons who have tested it. The results they describe are wonderful.

Rupture Book FREE

Write this very day for the Schuiling Book, "How to Cure Rupture," a scientific work in everyday language, telling all about this awful affliction, the modern method of cure and fully describing the Schuiling Rupture Lock. With it will be sent full particulars of the **Free Trial Offer**, the acceptance of which will enable you to learn by actual experience the wonders this modern scientific device is accomplishing.

Write today—simply fill in the coupon below or send your name and address on a post card.

Send This Today

I am determined to **prove** the wonders of this Rupture Lock to all. Write to me **now, this very day,** and get my 30 day **FREE TRIAL OFFER. Now, now** while you are thinking of it and have the address in front of you, **now** is the time; you've suffered long enough. The grandest surprise of your life awaits you.

SCHUILING RUPTURE INSTITUTE
105 W. Market St., Indianapolis, Ind.

Send me FREE your 30 day trial offer and also free book, "How to Cure Rupture."

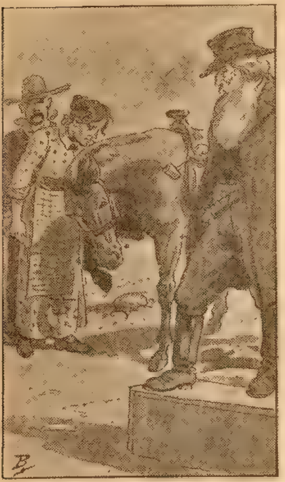
Name..

City ....

State ....

IN CUL-DE-SAC VALLEY

By PETER COTTON



Old Gal examined the animal.

CUL-DE-SAC Valley was a beautiful stretch of land lying in Montana between the Bitter Root and the Rocky Mountains. It was fed by numerous streams and inhabited by an isolated farming community which was a law unto itself. Dad Tupper, storekeeper and general agent, was its financial fount, Squire Ranter its social and legal arbiter.

The latter, a tall, patriarchial-looking man of sixty years, with piercing eyes and a flowing white beard, was known from the Canadian border to the Pacific Coast as the legal exponent of views indigenous to the soil of Cul-de-Sac Valley. His judgments and his decisions had spread throughout the mountainous West with a ring of finality no less imperious because of their isolated source, and Dad Tupper knew quite well that a horse thief could as easily pass through the eye of a needle as evade the Squire's astute penetration.

And a horse thief had just been captured. He was brought in by a part of the posse sent in search of him, and sat tied upon a roan horse beneath the spreading branches of a tree which had acquired renown as the Tribunal Tree. He was a clean-faced, weather-tanned lad to whom the wide sombrero and the red bandana lent a corroborative appearance of the West amply emphasized by his self-contained manner. Dad's eyes strayed from his boyish face to the horse.

"It's Si's hoss," he remarked.

"Hit shore is," affirmed Big Ike. "Hev the squire been sent for."

"He hev," Farmer Joe informed him. "Thar's the squire now."

The motley throng swayed, parted, and through the path that was opened the squire gravely passed on and up to the platform circling the Tribunal Tree and sat himself upon a soap box placed there for that purpose. Instantly pervasive silence ensued. The men edged closer and formed a semi-circle, and the squire laid down his hat as he mopped his brow with a mutil-colored handkerchief.

"If the co't please," announced Dad Tupper, "we've got him."

The squire put away his handkerchief and leisurely turned his keen eyes upon the boy. He scrutinized him intently, and then as his face grew harder and sterner his gray eyes flashed with alertness.

"What made you steal thet hoss," he asked, with judicial calm.

"I didn't steal him," the boy answered with a slightly defiant air.

"You didn't, hey?" The squire's eyes roved over the crowd. "Now you listen," he continued. "You been a-stealin' hosses in this valley for more than a month. You stole one from Dad Tupper, and one from Big Ike, and my team of blacks"—the squire frowned—"and last night you run off with Si Bilkins' roan—thet there hoss you are a-sittin' tied to right now. I want you to onderstand thet this co't has a judicial as well as a pussonal conscience, and bein' as you air a boy, if you air willing to confess the co't will hang you for only one hoss and let you off for the others. What hev you got to say to thet?"

The boy's face grew dark with wrath. "I didn't steal no hoss!" he exclaimed. "This is my hoss. I bought it."

"Uh-huh! You bought it, hey?" A shrewd gleam gathered in the squire's eyes. "The co't knows thet hoss," he said. "Hit knows it's Si's hoss, but being as this is a legal proceeding, I'll just ax the crowd. Men, is that Si Bilkins' hoss?"

"Hit is," chorused a volume of voices.

"Thar, prisoner! You are cotched in a lie to begin with."

"I ain't!" cried the boy. "I ain't told no lie. I bought this hoss from Poker Pete, so's he could get the money to go to Albuquerque. That's why I can't find him to prove it."

The squire glanced meaningly at the men, a laugh ensued, whispers filtered through the crowd, and as if by common consent all eyes were turned upon the boy—contemptuously. They knew that was Si Bilkins' horse, that he was lying, and upon the tensity of their silent repudiation of his denial fell an ominous, pervading silence, broken at length by a coarse laugh from the outskirts. The squire leaned forward animated, judicious, and grave. His eyes flashed and his voice rang stern.

"Prisoner," he said, "you air a liar—a onmitigated, low-down, hoss-thieving liar. This co't ain't much on poetry and eddication and heavenly attainments, but it's ace-high on facts and jurasprudence, and every fact backed by Blackstone and Tom O'Connor goes to prove you did steal that hoss. You stole it, do you onderstand, and by the eternal——"

"Now hold on, squire," cried Farmer Joe. "This hoss ain't been swore to yit."

The squire glared at the interrupter. "It hain't?" he cried. "Ain't the hull crowd proved it!"

"But Si ain't swore to it, and the prisoner says it's his'n—says 'taint Si's hoss at all."

"Si Bilkins! Whar's Si Bilkins?" roared the squire.

"Si ain't got in yit," called a voice from the outskirts. "He's with the yuther party gone towards Silver City."

The squire leaned disgustedly back against the trunk of the tree. "I know it's Si's hoss," he asserted. "The hull crowd knows it—and you know it, too, Joe. Now, don't you?".

Farmer Joe hesitated. "It looks like his'n," he admitted. "But squire, this yere prisoner's a boy. Wait for Si, or leastwise send for Old Gal Bilkins and let her swear to the hoss!"

"Yes, why don't you wait for Si Bilkins?" called the boy. "It's because you are locoed—a long-whiskered maverick run wild—a lean-jawed, snappin' coyote. You're wusser'n a bughouse dog bayin' at the moon. You wait, I tell you!"

With a painful effort at self-control the squire turned gravely to Dad Tupper. "Mr. Prosecutor," he asked, "hev this case been proved?"

"It hev," Dad solemnly answered.

The squire heaved a sigh of relief, and slanting his eye upon the waning sun he pondered. He knit his brows and brought his eyes grimly to a level with the prisoner's face. His manner was portentous. Like a swift, invisible current branding its meaning upon the brain, the terrible purpose in his mind flashed through the audience, and instinctively it knew what his next words would be, and they hung with bated breath upon them, tensely waiting. The squire lifted an impressive hand.

"It air the jedgment of this co't," he announced, "that you be hanged by the neck until you air dead, dead, dead. Git the rope, Mr. Sheriff!"

A sigh thrilled the throng, a flutter broke the silence, and the prisoner sat as one stunned, his air of bravado gone.

"Air you really goin' to hang me!" he asked, in an awed voice.

"We air," snapped the squire. "We air goin' to hang you because you are wusser'n pizen—a low-down, no 'count, disreputable hoss thief. Throw it over thet air limb, Ike."

"Swish-h-sh-sh!" hised the rope and then—it dangled with its yawning noose not ten feet away from the prisoner. His face paled, and he turned beseeching, pathetic eyes upon the squire.

"Sholy you ain't, is you?" he gasped.

"We is."

The squire's voice rang sharp with decision. "And now," he continued, "I want to ask you a question. Air you goin' to send your warped and twisted soul to hell with a lie stainin' it? Air you goin' to the beautiful land of Kingdom Come a-smellin' of hoss—Si Bilkins' hoss? Air you?"

The boy shuddered. He glanced frantically about him as though hoping for sympathy somewhere. But tragedy was in the atmosphere, and haught but hardened faces met his eyes.

"I didn't steal this hoss!" he cried, in a voice of panic. "I tell you I didn't. This is my hoss. It never was yourn. Please, won't you wait for Si Bilkins?"

"Or send for Old Gal Bilkins," supplemented Farmer Joe.

The squire was adamant. With unabated sterness he asked the prisoner if he could pray. "It air ag'in' the law," he said, "to hang a man what hain't prayed or been prayed for."

The boy lowered his eyes. "No," he answered in a whisper, "I can't pray. I dunno how."

"Then I'll call Parson Bob," said the squire. "Parson Bob! Oh, Parson Bob!"

"Parson Bob's with the yuther party, too," informed Sandy McDowell.

"What!" gasped Dad Tupper. "The parson ain't yere nuther."

The audience thrilled. The situation was serious. Tragedy was like to be averted. But the squire came to the rescue.

"Prisoner," he declared, "thet air the only p'int thet's cropped out in yore favor yit, and it ain't no p'int at all. Butte and Anaconda has set the precedent thet it's legal for a co't to pray for a hoss thief who can't pray and there ain't no parson by. This co't ain't completely up on Scripture, 'cepting a few remarks made by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, and it will remark as a pussonal axiom thet a co't comes mighty nigh stultifiyin' its judicial conscience when it prays for a hoss thief. However, it's got to be did, and so——"

"Now hold on, squire," again interposed Farmer Joe. "You kain't pray. You know you kain't. Wait for the parson and Si."

"Thet air a fact, Joe. Thet air a fact," murmured the squire. "But hit's got to be did. Prisoner, may the Lord help your onery soul through the gates of hell. Go on, Mr. Sheriff; go on with the hanging."

Struggling to free his hands from the thongs which bound them, the unhappy lad felt the noose settle coldly, sinuously, embracingly about his throat.

"Men," he cried in a stricken, appealing voice, "gimme a chanct! Don't hang me like a dog! Wait for Si Bilkins. I didn't steal thet hoss, I swear I didn't'

His voice died away in a sob, and the squire arose amidst profound, imposing silence. Towering tall and majestic above the throng, he swept it with a penetrating glance. Approval and expectancy met his eyes, and turning to Big Ike, he was about to give the signal, when from the outer edge of the throng there arose a shrill, hoarse cry.

"Here's Old Gal Bilkins. Make way for the Old Gal."

The squire sat down. A murmur surged through the throng; it parted, and through the opening a little wizened, dried-up woman appeared, leading two tow-headed boys.

"Oh, ma!" cried the eldest. "Lookee! Dad's hoss."

The frown vanished from the squire's brow. Smiles radiated from his face, and he called the lad to him with a paternal air.

"Is thet Si Bilkins' hoss."

'Oh, yes, thet's pa's hoss."

The squire laughed. He arose to his feet in triumph. "Didn't I say I knowed thet hoss?" he cried. "Now, prisoner, what hev you got to say. Air you going to confess?"

(Continued on page eighteen.)

The Real Secret of Keeping Face Young and Pretty

(From Woman's Tribune)

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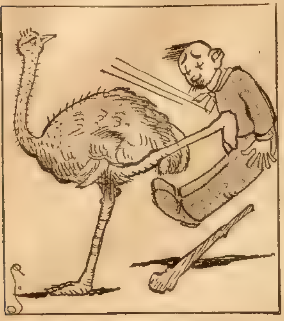
The Sportsman's Primer

By Norman H. Crowell

Ostrich Hunting.

THE ostrich hails from Austria, Australia, Oshkosh and other tropical and semi-explored localities. It is manufactured in the popular dip-front style of architecture and stands about twenty-seven hands high in its bare feet.

Considering that its center of gravity is so far removed from the world the ostrich is a most graceful contrivance. Although a large bird the ostrich has wings that would make a Plymouth Rock hen ashamed of herself. Without the voluminous tufts of feathers that adorn it the bird would be a very raw and uninteresting proposition, but Nature has kindly upholstered its roof and cupola with a foliage that makes society eagerly seek it.


An ostrich can swing his foot.

Some ostrichs are taller than others—some have their bodies situated so far up in the air that their legs are barely able to reach the ground. At the lower extremity of each limb the ostrich has an attachment resembling a smoked ham. This is, however, used as a foot. An ostrich can swing his foot against a man's corpus delicti with force enough to make him think he has met Maud the Mule.

For this reason an ostrich must always be approached on the bias with fear and trembling and a hickory club with a knot in it. Only the blind, the idiot, and the intentional suicide will walk up to an ostrich with his hands in his pockets.

Although it is supposed that ostriches have inhabited the earth since earliest antiquity, it is authentically stated that they were first discovered by the cook on one of Columbus' ships. This individual, Pedro Profundo by name, was heaving a bucket of potato peelings overboard one morning when he saw an ostrich running along the beach. He was racing the waves which were also running along the beach. Columbus took a crate of them back home but they are now dead.

On its native sands the ostrich is captured in a unique manner. The hunter, having located the bird on its nest, which is a spot on the desert, conceals himself until it gets hungry and goes out to lunch. He then scampers in and tucks the eggs into his apron and retires briskly. In due time the eggs matriculate and young ostriches appear. They are wobbly in the running gear but a careful diet of broken glass and crockery soon causes them to brace up. Coarser food is used after the sixth week.

When closely pursued the ostrich will stick his head inside the crust of the earth. He is then easily inserted into a banana crate or a sugar barrel. The bird is very sprightly on its feet and can run like a hound with a tomato can tied to his reverse. It is never safe to tamper with an ostrich's affections. Also never allow one to investigate your anatomy and pedigree without a strong letter of introduction. Keep away and save your friends the worry and trouble of basting you together again.

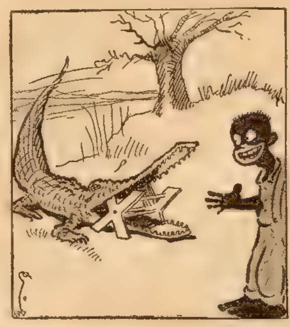
■

Crocodile Hunting.

ANY one who has sat up to a steaming section of crocodile wishbone can well imagine the scramble that ensues when the open season on this delectable game comes around and they can be killed on the fly, set or swim.

A young, light-complected crocodile of good lineage and regular habits makes an exceedingly toothsome mess, but great care must be taken at all times to avoid a helping from a wart-eyed old Methuselah who remembers the battle of Lake Erie.

The crocodile has a very annoying penchant for lurking in the slimy depths of streams and ponds cocked and ready to spring out and bite the stuffing out of the passer-by. This peculiar characteristic disqualifies him for an intimate and abiding friendship.


Propping his features open with a sawbuck.

A crocodile is as game as a pug dog looks, and will bite with equal enthusiasm a schoolma'am or a wheelbarrow. He is sociable in the extreme and will rub his back on the under side of your boat in the most friendly manner possible. He is playful, like a maiden aunt. If you notice a barrel or two of muddy water tear loose and flop into your lap it is because a humorous crocodile is having fun with you. This rollicking side of the beast's nature makes rubber pants a necessity in regions infested by him.

A crocodile, being constructed like a sofa, is not a gazelle on terra firma (Irish for land) and may be caught with the naked hands by any person who can run a hundred yards in less time than it takes to tell it. It is rarely done, however, as it is bad for the hands. Crocodiles are frequently found asleep, having rolled out of the bed of the river. To wake a crocodile up kick it severely on the eyeball. A better way is to let an acquaintance kick it. A still better plan is to get a mule, insure him to the limit against accident, fire and lightning, let the mule perform the dirty work. It will be amusing to you and means money for the mule.

A fat, shiny negro baby is the most seductive lure ever discovered for this game. The bait is staked out back of an old cane mill on the bayou (yow, as in cow) not forgetting to hand the fond parents a quarter to ease their pangs. In the course of pretty suddenly the bayou (as previously) will crack open like a frosted pumpkin dropped out of a fifth story window. This is a critical moment, as the game has appeared. The hunter draws a bead. He can do this with red crayon or charcoal as suits his convenience. As a crocodile's vitals are about the size of a nickel's worth of rock candy and are located midway between his hind knees and his eyebrows, it is a serious proposition to hit him where he exists.

A crocodile is never dead until a day or two after you kill him. After killing one, wait an hour and kill him again.

The tail of a crocodile can deliver a swat that sounds like a Presidential boom going off under a barrel.

In the Black Belt the natives have an amusing custom of sneaking up on a crocodile in his sleep and propping his features open with a rake or a sawbuck. This places the animal at their mercy, and by tossing sand or cockleburs down his throat he becomes so tickled that he bursts a blood vessel and expires laughing to the last.

* * *

Pupils' Excuses.

Droll excuses are frequently written by parents in explanation of the absence of their children from school. Here are a few specimens selected from a number actually received by teachers:

"Dear sir, please excuse James for lateness, I kneaded him after brekfust."

A second note reads: "Please forgive Billy for being tardy, I was mending his coat."

The third excuse goes more into details, but is none the less interesting: "Mister sir, my Jason had to be late today. It is his bizness to milk our cow. She kicked Jase in the back today when he wasn't looking or thinking of her actin' so durned suddin! so he thot his back was broke, but it ain't. But it is black and blue, and the pane kept him late. We would git rid of that cow if we could. This is the fourth time she kicked Jase, but never kicked him late before. So excuse him for me."

A girl absent for half a day brought the following satisfactory excuse: "Miss teacher—my dotter's absents yesterday was unavoidable. Her shoes had to be half-souled, and she had a sore throte. Her konstitushun is delikit, and if she is absent any more you can knew that it is en account of unavoidable sickness or something else."

A boy absent for half a day laid the following explanation on his teacher's desk: "Dear sir, please excuse Henry. He went to grandpapa's funeral with me this forenoon. I have been promising him for several weeks that he might, if he was good, and he has been very good, so I kept my word. He enjoyed the funeral."

* * *

A Blank Page.

"Ladies and gentlemen," shouted the loud-voiced cheapjack at the country market to the little crowd which had gathered, "this is the book for every one, the book for everywhere, the book—the book!" He tossed it up and caught it as it fell. Then he went on: "The book for everybody, see? Encyclopedia of eighty pages, recipe for every dish that was ever cooked, formula for the toothache, agreeable stories for old women, treatise for young women on the art of getting husbands, how to cure bunions without amputation, how to plant cabbage when the moon is full, how to breed rabbits, how to interpret dreams, how to tell fortunes, how to get a divorce, how to reckon up the interest on a mortgage. The book for everybody!"

But the audience was unappreciative, and he failed to dispose of a single copy. The cheapjack looked over the crowd with a disgust that could not be disguised.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he remarked. "I forgot to mention that in this incomparable book there is a blank page—for those who cannot read."

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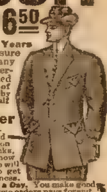

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A little gasoline will quickly remove Tanglefoot from clothes or furniture. (34)

In Cul-de-Sac Valley

(Continued from page sixteen.)

But the boy's courage had returned. "No, I am not," he shouted, with defiant firmness. "This is my hoss. I'm not going to die with a lie staining my soul."

The squire gave him a glance of withering contempt. "You onmitigated liar," he breathed. Then he turned to the Old Gal. "Mis' Bilkins," he said with unctuous politeness, "I wisht you'd look at thet hoss and tell the co't if hit's Si's."

The Old Gal examined the animal carefully—head, tail, hoofs, and shoulders, and then amidst tensity of silence she turned to the squire with an air of disgust. "No, 'taint," she said.

The squire was astounded. The audience filtered with whispers, and murmings arose from every part of it.

"But Mis' Bilkins," the squire remonstrated, "you must be mistaken. The hull crowd knows it's Si's hoss. The co't knows it, and——"

"Well, 'taint!" snapped the Old Gal. "Si Bilkins' hoss is a hoss. This yere hoss is a mare!"

* * *

She Didn't Like Him.

"You dear thing!" cried the girl in the green coat that bulged in the middle and was tied in around her ankles. "I haven't seen you since the Kipps party! Did you have a good time?"

The young woman in the shapeless mauve frock raised her eyebrows languidly. "I don't like to be critical," she murmured, "but it does seem to me that Gladys Kipps collects the queerest lot of people about her! I suppose I'm not used to that sort. And Gladys hasn't the first idea of being a successful hostess—so awkward and careless of her guests, don't you think?"

"She certainly seemed to be terribly fond of that new man—Bickens was his name, wasn't it?"

"I really don't know," yawned the girl in the shapeless frock. "I didn't notice him particularly. He seemed so very common. Any one that would be attracted by Gladys Kipps couldn't help being ordinary. She neglected everybody else shamefully for him!"

"I thought he was terribly good-looking'" said the girl in the green coat.

"My dear!" The girl in the mauve frock raised her hands and let them fall despairingly. "Don't tell me you were attracted by his type! Just like a butcher—with his broad shoulders and his red face——"

"He plays golf," explained the girl in the green coat. "He gets his color that way. Of course he had to be polite to Gladys——"

"That was no reason for his being absolutely rude to every one else!" retorted the girl in the mauve dress. "He——"

"I thought you said you hadn't noticed him," objected her friend. "You seem to have kept a watch on him pretty closely."

"I!" ejaculated the girl in the mauve frock. "How utterly absurd! I couldn't help seeing a creature like that who was eternally in view, could I? He was most annoying! I detest that kind of person who is so big that he fils up all the room! I was frightfully bored with the whole thing.

"Why, Mr. Perkins—Lockens—Bickens—that's it, Bickens, was just impossible! In fact, there were no interesting people there at all, outside of our very own crowd, my dear! This summer I met so many splendid men that it really was tiresome being thrown with a crowd like that one Gladys had! What on earth made her ask any one like that Mr. Pickles—Bickens—I am sure I don't know, except that poor Gladys never has any attention, and I suppose he made the mistake of being nice to her in a thoughtless moment and she grabbed him on the spot.

"However, he didn't seem to struggle very hard, I must say. He doesn't look as though he had any ideas in his head—he's one of these ponderous, slow moving individuals with whom talking is like moving a load of bricks!"

"It's too bad you have taken such a dislike to him," said the girl in the green coat. "After what Gladys Kipps told me he told her. I won't bore you by repeating it!"

"What he said?" repeated the girl in the mauve gown. "Why should he say anything about me? However, you've no right to conceal anything. It might be something impertinent that I ought to resent. I'm not otherwise interested, of course! What did he say?"

"Gladys said," answered her friend, "that the moment you entered the room he was attracted by you, and asked who you were, and he told Gladys he was dying to talk with you, but was afraid because you seemed so standoffish. He said something about your being the best-looking girl he had seen, too."

"The idea!" cried the young woman in mauve. "I think I may have misjudged Gladys. I think she always means well if she sometimes does make mistakes. Did you say Mr. Bickens was a football player? That would account for his magnificent build. Did you ever notice the expression of his eyes? I am sure he must have a brilliant mind. You always can tell so much from a man's expression, I think.

"I particularly hate to hurt people's feelings and I wish when you see Gladys you'd tell her to explan to Mr. Bickens that I am sorry if I was rude to him. I always want to be nice to everybody. Oh, yes—if Gladys wants to bring Mr. Bickens over to call some evening, I'll be glad to see him—her, I mean. He's a friend of hers, and I want to be nice to him for that reason. Now, don't forget!"

"Not if I can get over this dazed feeling," said the girl in the green coat.

* * *

Worldly Goods.

It was at a fashionable wedding in Savannah. The bridegroom had no visible means of support save his father, who was rich; but when he repeated that portion of the service, he said boldly:

"With all my worldly goods I thee endow!"

Whereupon the father said in a stage whisper that could be heard all over the church:

"Heavens! There goes his bicycle!"

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GENTLE JABS

The lack of money is one root of evil.

Paper money is soft, but hard to get.

Man is the architect of his own misfortune.

Contentment is often the result of being asleep.

More things come to those who do not wait for them.

Generating hot air is easier than getting up steam.

Some people's only aim in life seems to be to throw mud

It takes the better half to see the worst side of a man.

But the man who lives a double life often has to do two men's work.

When you search for honor among thieves take a policeman along.

And many a man indulges in horse play who doesn't play the races.

Herein also is foolishness: To feather one's nest with borrowed plumes.

Anybody may be connected with a lot of prominent families—by telephone.

Why hunt for trouble? Everything comes to him who merely hangs around.

When the average man has a headache he realizes what an aching void is.

Why should a woman who can speak but one language talk enough for two?

Wisdom of the man who knows it all is valuable, but so is the hole in a doughnut.

Some people would cry over spilled milk even if they don't like milk in any form.

The man who follows his inclination seldom travels long in the straight and narrow way.

Some men try to hide their light under a bushel, while some others make a fireworks display.

The more things a man learns from experience the more things he would like to forget, but can't.

A critic, Cordelia, is a person who is unable to do a thing in the way he thinks it ought to be done.

We know a young man who considers himself a warm member merely because he burns his candle at both ends.

Blessed is the man who discovers in the hour of his adversity that he has a lot more friends than he thought he had—but he is scarce.

The young man in the parlor scene may lose sight of the girl's mother, but it doesn't follow that she has lost sight of him—if there's a convenient keyhole.

PEPPERS

Using First Names.

Philander Knox, Secretary of State in Taft's Cabinet, was formerly engaged in the practice of law in Pittsburgh.

One day, says a friend, Mr. Knox was much put out to find on his arrival at his office that everything was topsy-turvy and that the temperature was much too low for comfort. Summoning his office boy, a lad only recently entered in his employ, the lawyer asked who had raised every window in the place on such a cold morning

"Mr. Muldoon, sir," was the answer.

"Who is Mr. Muldoon?" asked the attorney.

"The janitor, sir."

"Who carried off my waste-basket?" was the next question.

"Mr. Reilly, sir."

"And who is Mr. Reilly?"

"He's the man that cleans the rooms."

Mr. Knox looked sternly at the boy and said: "See here, Richard; we call men by their first names here. We don't 'mister' them in this office. Do you understand?

"Yes, sir." And the boy retired.

In a few minutes he reappeared and in a shrill, piping voice announced:

"There's a gentleman that wants to see you, Philander."

❧

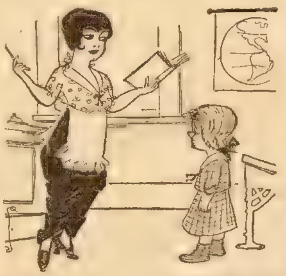
No Hurry.

When Senator Kern was running for Governor of Indiana, he stopped one noon at a little hotel in Brown County for some food.

"Hurry up, now," Kern said to the proprietor. "I have only fifteen minutes before my train comes."

"No hurry, Governor," the hotel-keeper replied. "You can eat all there is in this hotel in five minutes."

❧



Teacher—"Give a sentence including the word 'distress.'"

Pupil—"Me mudder made me wear dis dress."

■

Damages Enough.

The conversation turned to Pat in a Washington club, and a Congressman from Wisconsin was reminded of how an esteemed citizen of that State got tangled up in a recent railroad wreck.

When the smoke had cleared away, and the wreck, which wasn't a very serious affair, was pulled apart, Pat's friends found him sitting beside the track holding his head in one hand and his leg in the other, said members, of course, not being detached.

"How are you feeling, Pat?" asked one of the party, stooping to assist the wounded man. "Are you badly hurt?"

"Shure, an' thot Oi am," answered Pat, whose worst injury was a bunch of bumps. "Oi fale as if a road roller an' a bloomin' mule had stepped on me durin' a foight."

"Never mind, old fellow," sympathetically returned the other. "It's not so bad as it might have been, and you will get damages."

"Damages!" exclaimed Pat. "Begorra, an' Oi've had enough av thim. It's repairs that Oi'm after now."

❧

Quail on Toast.

The tourist who was anxious for game entered a western Texas hotel, paused and looked around. Then he quietly approached the desk and addressed the proprietor:

"Any quail about this neighborhood?"

"Quail!" echoed the proprietor, with an indulgent smile. "They have become so numerous around here that they are a nuisance. The cook complains that she can't throw a piece of toast out of the kitchen window, but four or five fat quail fight to see which one shall get on it."

■

The Irish Echo.

A Killarney tourist was assured by a guide that the echo on Loch Gill was fine. So off went the tourist to hear it, and hired two men to row him out, accomplishing the transaction so swiftly that there was no time for them to arrange for the usual echo to be in attendance. In despair they broke an oar, and one swam ashore to fetch another. The echo then began.

"Good-morrow," cried the tourist.

"Good-morrow," said the echo, with a fine brogue.

"Fine day, bless it."

"Foine day. God bless it," improved the echo.

"Will you have a drink?" cried the tourist.

"Begorra, I will!" roared the echo.

❧

A Deadly Joke.

Recently, at a place which is famous for its aerodrome, a youthful wag was watching with interest some wonderful contests in the air. Just when excitement was at its height the wag started up a rambling conversation with those immediately around him.

"That's a terrible poison that's just been discovered," he remarked amiably to no one in particular.

"What's it called?" inquired an elderly gentleman beside him.

"Why, aeroplane poison, of course!" came the curt reply.

"Is it deadly?" asked the e. g.

"I should say so!" jerked out the juvenile wag, in his most knutty style.

"And how much would kill a person?" went on the questioning one.

"Oh, one drop!" came the retort.

Then that particular group became the less by one.

❧

Creating a Demand.

Her hat obscured his view at the theater, and in kindly voice he leaned forward and asked if it would be possible for her to remove it.

A stiffening of the head was his only answer. After a few moments he repeated his request. Then she turned on him.

"There is no demand for my doing so,' she said.

"No demand?" he echoed.

Then he rolled his overcoat and placed it on his seat, sat on it, and getting his hat from under the seat, placed it on his head.

In a moment there was a cry of "Take it off!" "Take that hat off!"

And with a swift movement the lady unfastened her hatpins and removed her hat. Then the man removed his.

❧

Better After Dark.

In the struggling days at Muskogee Booker T. Washington found that he would have to use an old chicken house for a school room.

"Uncle," he said to an old colored man, "I want you to come down at 9 o'clock tomorrow morning and help me clean out a hen house."

"Law, now, Mr. Washington," the old man expostulated, "you-all don't want to begin cleanin' out no hen house round' yere in de daytime."

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BOY SCOUT RIFLES

Or, Beyond the Rio Grande

By Lieut. Victor O. Endoll

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Begun in No. 17, April 25. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back copies can be obtained from news stands, our agents, or by mail from the office of publication.

CHAPTER XXIII.

VIOLA'S STORY.

OUR party of friends reached the Barnado villa by the middle of the afternoon. To the surprise of all they found the place once more in possession of the servants, who had fled for a time, being in deadly fear of Captain Guzman and his men.

A consultation was held in which the chief participators were Don Fernando, Jack Brady, his Uncle Darius, Major McGreggor, and the brave and generous American, Jim Straub.

"I am completely in doubt about the fate of my wife and child," said the American ranch owner. "They were away from the house at the time of the Red Flagger raid, in which every animal on the place was driven off and myself made a prisoner. I was afterward told that the women were held prisoners to await the payment of ransom. I thought to speak with this Captain Guzman, but his unexpected death has cut that out. Once I find my wife and Viola, it shall be my first endeavor to take them to a place of safety, after which I shall come back and seek a settlement for the outrage perpetrated, I firmly believe, by the order of Captain Guzman."

"The Mexican Government shall be held responsible," declared Don Fernando. "However, I would advise you to quit Mexico for a time, till the rebellion is subdued."

"That seems a coward's way," commented the American rancher.

"On the contrary, I consider it the courageous way," declared the Mexican don, in great seriousness. "Single-handed you can do absolutely nothing. It remains for you to make out a bill for damages against the Government of Mexico. I will prove a valuable witness. Madero will never countenance the robbery of American noncombatants, be sure of that."

"I should prefer to stop right here and have it out with the vandals," uttered Mr. Carlingford, his keen eye flashing. "I have, however, to consider my wife and child."

"That is true. Sulazar is massing a considerable army not far from here. His foragers will certainly live off the country. 'Tis best for you to take the home folks and yourself across the line till we put down the rebellion."

And both Jack and Jim agreed with the old don.

"I might say the same for you, Don Fernando," smilingly returned the American. "You have been almost as badly used as I. The country beyond the Rio Grande is open to you for a refuge whenever you seek it."

"No doubt of that, but not now. I shall return to Mexico City and consult with President Madero about the situation in this part of Mexico. There is need of a strong Federal force up this way."

After consulting for an hour, it was decided that the Ready Rifles should escort Carlingford back to his home, from whence the American rancher could seek for his relatives among the natives in San Pedro, whither they had gone just before the raid had been made on the Carlingford hacienda.

Just as the Boy Scouts were lined up to depart, a slender form darted from a side door and ran to the side of the leading mustang—Senorita Izora, who stood bashfully looking up into the face of Captain Jack Brady.

"I hope you will escape from Mexico," said she, "and not have to fight your way out."

"Oh, as for that, much depends on whether my Aunt Esther and her daughter are given up to us. You can bet we aren't going to leave Mexico without Viola and her mother."

"Never!" exclaimed Steve and Eric Hemington in unison.

"We'll put one over the ragamuffins of Sulazar unless we get the women," declared Major McGreggor.

"I believe we have a big fight yet on hand," offered Jim Straub.

"I should like to go with you," declared the Mexican girl.

"Why can't you?" asked Jack. "By George! I reckon the don will let you go and call on Viola and her mother."

"If they were only at home, be sure I should go."

"But they are not, so that ends it," uttered Don Fernando, severely.

The little party rode away, promised by Don Fernando that he might soon visit the United States himself, in a missionary way, from his Government.

"Should this happen, I shall fetch along my wife and Izora. The good senora is American, you know," and a low laugh accompanied the words.

Jack rode at the front beside his uncle. The latter was very grave and taciturn during the few miles ride across country. There was good cause for this serious condition of mind on the part of the American rancher. He was in a very prosperous condition at the time the Mexicans raided his hacienda, destroying crops, stealing cattle and horses. If no restitution were made, he knew himself a ruined man.

Even this, however, was of secondary consideration when his wife and child were taken into account. He had the gravest fears with regard to them, fears that each moment grew in magnitude. As for himself, there might still be personal danger, yet he was ready to meet that with courage and becoming fortitude. He had faith to believe that the Madero government would in the end win out, and that his losses, together with those of others, would in time be made good.

Now that Captain Guzman was dead, the American rancher believed he had less to fear in a personal way. Considering the Mexican officer's double dealing, it was certainly a lucky shot that had hurled him to his death.

On sighting the walls of the Carlingford home, Jack and his uncle spurred their mustangs into a gallop, riding up some distance in advance of the main body. Jack dismounted and ran up the steps. The front door stood wide open; within the door stood a smiling, blue-eyed girl of perhaps twelve years. Jack paused on the upper step, petrified for the moment at what he beheld. Then, with a great shout, he ran forward, clasping Miss Blue Eyes in his arms.

"Cousin Viola, safe and sound!" yelled the delighted boy.

Close behind Jack strode Mr. Carlingford. Glancing beyond the two youngsters in the doorway, he saw the white yet smiling face of a middle-aged woman, the wife of his bosom, of whose fate he had known nothing for some time.

The reunion between the separated ones of this family was most affecting. It was some time ere the woman and her daughter could command their feelings sufficiently to give an account of the happenings of the past few weeks.

Jack, who had not seen his relatives in Mexico for over two years, was very active in the expression of sympathy and joy at finding them unharmed. He and Viola walked aside, and the girl talked rapidly to her boy cousin, detailing her own and her mother's experiences.

"We were never really prisoners," explained the young American miss. "Mamma and I went down into the town to visit some American friends. While we were there we heard of the raid of outlaws upon papa's hacienda. Oh, but I was fearfully frightened! I wanted to hurry right back to our home, but the Browns, where we were stopping, would not hear of it. 'Twouldn't be safe at all, they said. Instead, they sent a Mexican friend to investigate.

"This man came back soon with the news that many of the stables had been burned, all the cattle either slaughtered or driven away, and that a lot of wild savages—mostly half-Indian, half-Mexican—were ravaging the whole country. We were frightened about papa. We couldn't do a thing, though.

"We stayed with the Browns for quite a long time, getting news every day about the war and the fighting. Oh, it was dreadful. I cried my eyes most out during the first week. After a while our Mexican friend met an officer named Guzman, who told him that papa had been taken prisoner; that he was not harmed; had been treated well, and would some time return to us.

"After that we felt better. All kinds of stories were afloat, and when we could stand it no longer, we induced Mexican Jose to bring us over to the old home. We came only a few hours ago. Wonderful that we should come at about the same time that you and papa did!"

"Yes, it was all wonderful enough."

Plans for the future were now in order The mother and daughter were only too anxious to get from the country during its present unsettled state. This fact determined Darius Carlingford to remove to the United States for the time being. It was not very far to the border, once across which neither Mexican bandits nor regular army soldiers could molest him or his.

"We will go in the morning," decided Carlingford, "back to the good old Yankee land. Of course, I shall return——"

"After the war, not before, Darius," declared Esther Carlingford.

"Well, as to that, we shall see," responded the gentleman. "Our brave Jack here, no doubt saved me to my family; I am rather inclined to defer to what he thinks best."

"Of course, you will all return home with me," cried Jack. "Up among the copper hills of old Michigan you will be safe till Madero's reign is fully confirmed, after which will come the reckoning, Uncle Darius."

CHAPTER XXIV.

SAFE IN LAND OF LIBERTY.

A NEW surprise awaited the inmates of the Carlingford home when morning dawned. There came the sound of swiftly rolling carriage wheels. The sun had climbed but a little way above the eastern hills when Don Fernando, his daughter, and their driver dashed swiftly up to the door. Mr. Carlingford and Jack immediately ran out to greet them.

The old don was white of face, with a strange, troubled light shining in his handsome eyes.

"Anything new?" asked Carlingford. trust nothing serious has happened"

"Can I leave Izora with you, Senor Carlingford?" returned the old don. "I must hasten my return to Mexico City, and I do not like to expose the dear child to any more dangers."

Before the American rancher could make reply, Viola and her mother had flown out to the carriage, thus very much astonishing its inmates. Izora was taken bodily into the maternal arms of Mrs. Carlingford and borne into the house, after which Darius explained.

A new, hopeful light dawned in the eyes of Don Fernando.

"This simplifies matters," he said. "I shall not worry on Izora's account. She will be in good hands. I dare not delay another hour. New troubles have fallen

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upon my beloved country. Heaven alone knows where it will end."

"New troubles, don?"

"Aye, the worst that could possibly happen."

"You whet my curiosity as well as my fears, Don Fernando," cried Carlingford.

"Then you have not heard?"

"I have heard nothing new," answered the other. "Has Sulazar won a battle? Is the red-handed rebel sweeping all before him? I am——"

"Not that, not that," interrupted the Mexican, "but, just Heaven! how can it be so? President Madero is dead!"

"The President dead:

"Dead, Senor Carlingford—murdered by the wicked rebels of Mexico City! General Huerta is now at the head of Government, and the liberties of dear Mexico lie prostrate! You will understand how imperative it is that I hasten my return South. My wife may have been sacrificed ere now to the bloodthirsty Red Flaggers!"

The news brought by the don was indeed most startling. There was no reasoning him out of his determination to return at once to the capital city. His wife would look for him, and she must not look in vain.

However much Izora felt saddened at having her father depart without her, it was his mandate that she accompany the Americans across the line, and she could do no other way than accept the parental bidding.

"Such a piece of business!" exclaimed Carlingford, after the departure of the don.

"I should think as much!" coincided Jack. "This mean that the Reds will now be the national party, the others the rebels. A great turnabout. I am only too glad that you, Uncle Darius and Aunt Esther, were found in the nick of time. The sooner we get over the line the better."

"The sooner the better," echoed Jack's uncle.

Immediately thereafter the Ready Rifles and their fair charges were seen to move away from Carlingford hacienda, the Rifles mounted on mustangs, the women riding in a double carriage procured by the American rancher of a friend in the village. In this manner they made all haste toward the Texas border.

Once a considerable party of Mexicans, plainly Red Flaggers, halted them on the way, demanding to know their business.

"We are Americans bound for El Paso," said Jim, who was given the task of speaking to the Mexicans in their own language.

"Have to go back," warned the Mexican officer.

There were perhaps forty of the Mexicans, armed and ugly to look at. Jack gave the order to fall in line, guns at a present, ready for bloody work.

"Tell them we are going to Texas, anyhow, Jim."

This warlike demonstration had its effect. The Mexican leader pretended to laugh off his demands, permitting the Ready Rifles to continue on their way. This proved to be their only serious menace.

Some days later the boy raiders reached El Paso, where they sent telegrams home. Mr. Carlingford consulted with Jack, deciding to remain in the Texas city for a few days for rest and recuperation.

"I shall stop here till my father and mother come," declared Izora, when Jack asked her about going north with his uncle's people.

"They will hardly come this way," said the boy captain. "The safest route for them to pursue from Mexico City will be to the coast, from there by boat to New Orleans."

"Then I shall go to New Orleans."

Jack smiled. "To New Orleans, Miss Barnado? All alone?"

"Why, of course. You and the rest go North from here. I heard you talking," returned the Mexican girl, with flushed cheeks and shining eyes.

"Not without you," spoke Jack, decidedly.

"But I couldn't go, leaving my people down there," murmured Izora, two big tears rolling from her eyes across her cheeks.

"I know that all right, Izora," cried Jack, pressing her warmly by the hand. "I have known it all along. I have given orders for Steve, Buster, Jim, Eric, and Major McGreggor to break ranks here and conduct the rest of the Ready Rifles home. They go tomorrow, but we stay and go to New Orleans to await there the coming of Don Fernando and his wife. Does that suit you, Miss Barnado?"

Jack's eyes were smiling into hers as he talked.

"We?" she asked, her big eyes two interrogation points.

"Uncle, aunt, and Viola, of course."

"Oh, Senor Jack! you are so good!" exclaimed the Mexican girl.

"Not good enough for you, Miss Barnado. I'd be a chump and a sad dog to leave you down here all alone among strangers. My uncle and aunt will go to New Orleans and await the coming of their very dear friends from Mexico City."

"How good you all are," and the pretty senorita began to cry. Her tears were shed on Jack's shoulder. Immediately afterward the boy and girl joined the Carlingfords in the hotel parlor.

The Ready Rifles disposed of their mustangs and arms at a fair price, after which, under the guidance of Major McGreggor, they set out for the North, well satisfied with their few weeks of adventure along the Mexican border.

Jack and his relatives reached New Orleans in good season. For a time there was deep anxiety felt by the Americans over the fate of Don Fernando and his wife. Rumors of all kinds circulated after the cruel assassination of the Mexican President. Once word came that Don Fernando, who was one of Mexico's most influential citizens and a strong friend of the Madero government, had been seized and put to death by the cruel followers of Huerta.

Senorita Izora was quite ill after this, only the cheerful example and comforting words of Jack Brady holding her from utter collapse.

One morning, about a month after the flight from Mexico, Jack rushed into the presence of Izora and his aunt, with a shout and a toss of his big leather-banded sombrero.

"How now, Jack, my boy?" cried Darius Carlingford, who just then stepped into the room.

"Great news!" shouted Jack. "The steamer Tornado has arrived from Vera Cruz, and guess who is among her list of passengers!"

"Oh, oh, is it my father and mother?" screamed Senorita Izora, darting upon Jack like a young, half-scared kitten.

For answer the boy turned and hurled open the door, admitting two foreign-looking people, who at once proceeded to smother little Miss Barnado with kisses.

"Papa! mamma, how glad I am!"

"And we are glad enough to escape to a friendly shore," assured the gifted Mexican gentleman, as he took his daughter to his heart.

"Now," said Jack, "we all start tomorrow for my home in Michigan, where you shall all be welcome till this Mexican revolution is over and peace comes once more to that unhappy land."

"Amen to that," uttered Mr. Carlingford.

In next week's Ledger another splendid story for boys will appear, entitled, "Warship Adventures; or, Frank Allen at Sea." It will tell you all about the United States navy, how to join it, what the duties of a navy-boy are, what he has to do in battle, and the adventures he encounters and the strange sights he sees in different parts of the world. The story is both instructive and very entertaining. It is a story you cannot afford to miss. Look out for it sure.

The End.

* * *

"The Spirit of '76."

A New York merchant met a friend on the street, who told him he had quit the buttonhole-making trade.

"I'm in the art business now," he said proudly—"such a fine business, too! Lots of money in it!"

"What do you mean—art business?" demanded his friend.

"Well," explained the other, "I go to auction sales and buy pictures cheap; then I sell 'em high. Yesterday I bought a picture for twenty-five dollars, and today I sold it for fifty."

"What was the subject?"

"It wasn't no subject at all," said the art collector, "it was a picture."

"Sure, I know," said the other, "but every picture has to have a subject, or it isn't a regular picture, you understand. Was this here picture a marine, or a landscape, or a still life, or a portrait—or what? What did it represent?"

"How should I know?" said the puzzled exbuttonholer. "To me a picture is a picture! This here picture didn't have no name. It was a picture of three fellers and one flag. One feller had a fife, one feller had a drum, and one feller had a headache!"

* * *

Dangerous.

"She was even more afraid of cows than most girls, so when she spied a placid animal recumbent under a tree, peacefully chewing its cud, she at first refused to go through the pasture at all. Her husband calmed her fears to some extent, and they started by, when the cow slowly commenced to get up, hind legs first, as they always do. At this the little lady shrieked with terror and said:

"Oh, Bob, hurry, hurry, he is getting ready to spring at us!"

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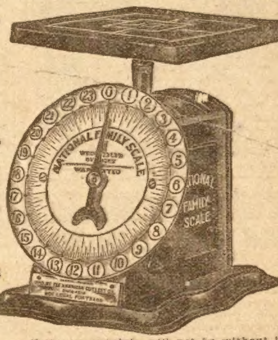

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THE FAIRY CORNER

A WISH.

I learn the rules of baseball,
And learn them very quick;
I wish it were the same with
My arithmetic.

CANNING.

Centuries ago in the heart of a prosperous country lived a poor farmer's daughter who toiled from early morning until sunset. Her father and mother died when she was a slip of a girl, and to keep from starving she had done the work of a man. She rose at the peep of dawn to gather her morning's produce, and by six o'clock she had harnessed her one poor horse to a solitary tumble-down wagon. She was always first in the village with her vegetables and fruits.

One year when there had been great plenty, Meg—this was the girl's name—noticed that morning after morning a green worm slid off the radishes as she dug them up. It dropped from the beautiful ripe tomatoes as she plucked them. Sometimes she encountered it in the orchard among the apples and peaches and pears. At last one day she caught one of these strange visitors and was about to tread him under foot when a voice arrested her:

"Do not kill me," it said; "many will come in my place. I am the advance guard of a great army, and I warn you to gather what you can this year, for my people will come hungry and they will leave a famine behind them."

"But I have more fruit and more vegetables than I can use. How can I keep them for a whole year without rotting?" asked Meg, scarcely able to believe what she heard.

"Speak to the old woman by the well. She can tell you."

So saying, he slipped away, and Meg, after a hard day's work, went down to the little hut by the well, which was avoided by the villagers because the old woman was supposed to be a witch.

She found the old woman bending over a strange brew on her fire; it had a pungent, sweet odor; the air was full of it, and it aroused Meg's hunger.

The old woman nodded to her guest, but went on stirring.

"What is that?" asked Meg curiously.

"Jam," replied the old woman. "Taste it."

"I never heard of 'jam' before," said Meg, drawing back.

"Didn't you? It's good."

"What is it made of?" asked Meg.

"These are peaches; you can use blackberries or currants, or raspberries, or apples, or anything else. But what do you want?"

"To learn your secrets," said Meg. "There will be a famine next year."

"Ah, you have seen the worm!"

"Yes."

"Then come." She led the way, and Meg found herself in a room lined with jars of stone and glass, filled with fruit and vegetables, preserved in their natural color. There were tomatoes as fresh as when they had been plucked; there were rosy apples and peaches floating around in a clear liquid; there were beans and peas and cucumbers; in fact, everything that grew to be eaten had been stored away by this provident old woman. She had almost as much in that one little room as Meg could gather through a summer.

"If you were rich," she said, "you should not know my secrets; but make haste and lay in your harvest. Do not leave it for the birds to peck at. Work now, and you may play hereafter."

Her keen old face beamed with such genuine good will that Meg went home with a light heart, though she had to work now harder than ever. But she kept her own counsel, and no one knew how through the long watches of the night the poor farmer's daughter and the old woman of the well labored side by side, storing away provisions against the coming famine, while the light-hearted villagers danced and sang the hours away.

The famine came, as the worm had foretold, and the King of the country did not know which way to turn to save his starving subjects. At last he issued a proclamation that whosoever could provide his people with food for the space of a week until help should come from his neighbors should enjoy every benefit in his kingdom and be raised to the highest rank in his court.

Then the old woman of the well said: "It is our time." And she took from a chest, strewn with sweet smelling herbs, a gown of shimmering satin.

"Loosen your braided locks," she said to Meg, and the farmer girl's wealth of golden hair fell in a bright shower. She put on the gown, and straightway forgot that she had ever labored in the fields.

"Now go your way to the castle and tell the King of your treasure," said the old woman, and taking the trailing skirt over her arm, Meg went like a deer to the hillside. They saw her coming and sent a retinue to meet her, and the King received her as if she were a royal princess.

When he heard of what was garnered up at the very door of the castle he was beside himself with joy, and caused the village bell to be rung, that the people might rejoice with him, and his servants went and marveled at the goodly store. They also captured the old woman of the well and brought her before the King.

"My daughter—save me!" she cried. I have taught you much."

"Is that your mother?" asked the King. "What is your name, old woman?"

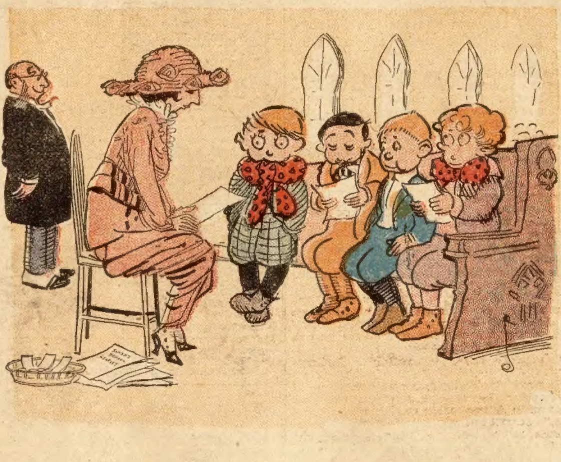
"My name, sire, is Necessity—and I am the mother of——"

"Invention!" cried the King. "That is the lady's name; she shall reside always in my kingdom to show my artisans how to garner the first fruits and do other and wondrous things."

"And I?" asked the old woman of the well.

"You may live on at the foot of the hill and show the way to others," said the King.

Thus it was decreed and it has always been. To this day the fruits are gathered and packed away so that throughout the land there can be no fear of famine.



The Teacher—"What good lesson do we learn from the story of Samson and Delilah?"
The Kid—"That we oughta keep away from the lady barber."

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Whoever is becoming deaf or has head noises, can obtain particulars free by writing to Edward Gregory, 6 W. Forbes street, Jamaica Plain, Mass.

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WANTED SOLDIERS' HOMESTEADS Union soldiers who homesteaded less than 160 acres before June 23, 1874, are entitled to additional rights, even though entry was relinquished or abandoned. If soldier is dead, widows or heirs have his rights. I pay spot cash for these claims. Cash paid for names of pensioners. (Comrade) W. E. MOSES, Room 585, First Nat. Bank Bldg., Denver, Colorado.

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Pat's Astronomy.

Pat found it impossible to believe that the earth is round, in spite of the numerous arguments of an eminent astronomer.

"But look here, Pat," said the latter, "you must see that the earth can't be anything else but round. Now, tell me where does the sun rise?"

"In the east, of course," said Pat.

"And where does it set?"

"Why in the west."

"Well, then, how does it manage to get back in the east again by the morning? Tell me that?"

Pat thought hard for a minute. Then an intelligent look dawned in his eye.

"Why, of course," said he, at last, "it just slips back at night."

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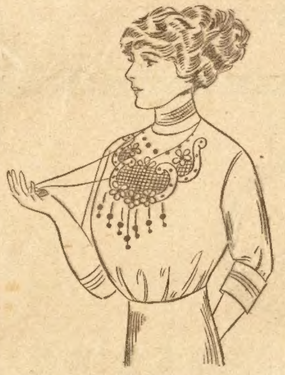
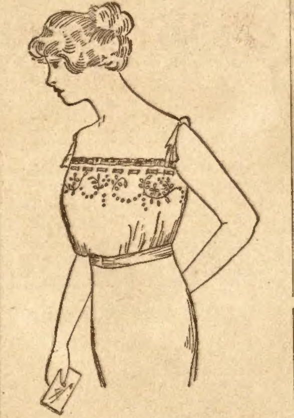
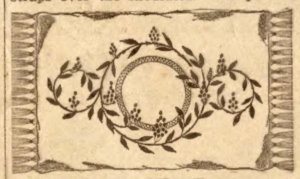


No. 117, Waist.

NO. 117, WAIST FOR PUNCH WORK AND SOLID EMBROIDERY.—Here is a tasteful design for an embroidered waist stamped on two yards of 39-inch lawn. We also include the floss for working. You can get this free of any charge by sending $2.00 for a year's subscription to the Blade and Ledger.



No. 118, Corset Cover.



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NO. 118, CORSET COVER.—This corset cover is one of the latest imported styles, designed to be worn with ribbon straps over the shoulders. The pattern is stamped on first quality nainsook, and we will send the embroidery floss for working.

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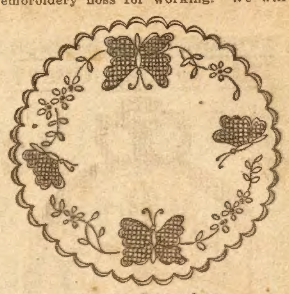

No. 121, Centerpiece.

NO. 121, CENTERPIECE FOR PUNCH WORK EMBROIDERY.—Butterfly design. This attractive design is stamped on Irish linen, 22x22 inches, including embroidery floss for working. We will send it, free of charge, to any one sending $1.00 for a year's subscription to the Blade or Ledger.

* * *

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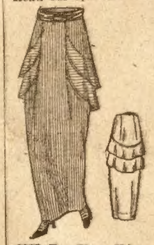
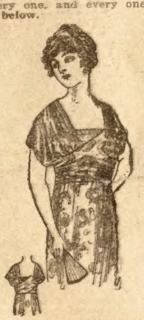
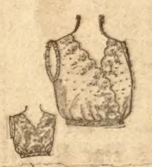


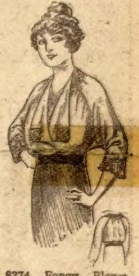
8273 Two-Piece Skirt, 22 to 32 waist.



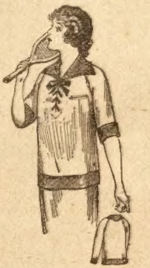
8280 Fancy Blouse, 34 to 42 bust.



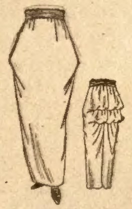
8295 Corset Cover, 34 to 42 bust.



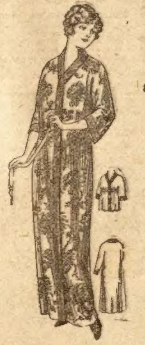
8274 Fancy Blouse, 34 to 40 bust.



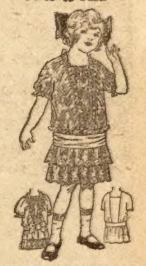
8263 Middy Blouse for Misses and Small Women, 14, 16 and 18 years.



8289 One-Piece Skirt, 22 to 30 waist.



8286 Long or Short Kimono, Small 34 or 36, Medium 38 or 40, Large 42 or 44 bust.



8285 Girl's Shirred Dress, 6 to 10 years.

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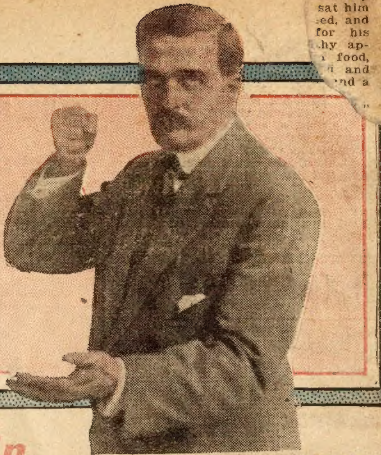

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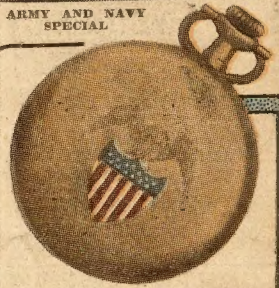

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